Ultimum Vale:

OR,

The Last FAREWEL of a Minister of the Gospel to a beloved People.

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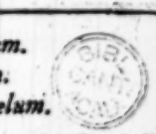
Cœlum non Animum.
Cœlum ne Animum.
Non Animum ne Cœlum.



Heb. 13. 7.

Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the Word of God, whose Faith follow, considering the end of their conversation.

2 Pet. 1. 12, 13.

Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you alwayes in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and be established in the present Truth.

Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up, by putting you in remembrance.

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Ultimum Vale:

OR,

The *Last Farewel* of a Minister of the Gospel to a Beloved People.

Acts 20. 32.

And now, Brethren, I commend you to God, and to the Word of his Grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among them that are sanctified.

THe blessed Apostle *Paul* being from all Eternity intended and designed by God to be a glorious President of the *Riches* and *Almightiness* of his Pardoning Mercy and Converting Grace, (as the Apostle tells you, 1 *Tim.* 1. 14.) God did therefore cause his Grace in the Conversion of *Paul* not only to *abound*, but to *super-abound*; As it is there expressed, Ὑπερεπλεόνασε ἡ χάρις τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν. He that was a *Blasphemer*, and was a *Persecutor*, and was *Injurious*, being now by the rich and powerful Grace of God converted to be a *Believer*, to be a *Preacher*, to be a *Martyr*.

So the *Lord Christ*, tells him at his first appearing to him, as himself records it, *Acts* 26. 16. *I have appeared to thee, to make thee a Minister, and a Martyr*; προχειρίσασθαι σε ὑπηρέτην καὶ μάρτυρα.

Non cuivis competit. Every Saint of God is not called to such a degree of *Honour*, as to be made a *Minister* and a *Martyr* the *first day*, and that of their *conversion*. No more than *every King* hath the *honour* to be a *King as soon as he comes into the World*. But this was the exceeding abundant Grace of God towards *Paul*, above all others.

Paul had now spent about some *eighteen years* in the painful and laborious discharge of his *Ministry*, though not without some intermixtures of bitter Sufferings, *Drops of that great Martyrdom, whereby he was to close and seal up his Ministry at last, and glorifie God.*

And having it now revealed to him, that the time was drawing nigh wherein he must be offered up unto the *Sacrifice* and *Service* of that *Faith* which he had so long preached, having visited several of the *Churches* planted by his own *Ministry*, he now makes hast to *Jerusalem*, though he knew that was the place where the *Tragedy* of his *Suffering* was to begin, *v.* 22, 23.

Having therefore for the more expedition, determined to *slip* by *Ephesus* (for so the word παραπλεῦσαι signifies) and not to *touch* or *enter* there, for fear of being *too long* detained among them, and yet not willing *Insalutatos praterire*, to pass by his *Christian Friends and Brethren* there, without so much as *saluting* them.

Therefore from *Miletus*, he sends to *Ephesus, and calls the Elders of the Church* thither, to *Miletus*, to him, *ver.* 17.

Ephesus was the *Metropolis*, the *cheif City* of the *lesser Asia*, where *Paul* had spent at several times *three years*, in the preaching of the *Gospel*, and by the blessing of *God* upon those labours, had gathered there a *Famous*, and a *Glorious Church* unto *Jesus Christ*, and had *there*, as in other *Churches*, Acts 14. 23. *constituted and ordained Elders*, to whom he resigned the *whole*

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Care and Government of those Churches, and that by the *direction and appointment of the holy Ghost himself.*

It is observed by many (and is indeed very obvious, and easy to observe) that though here be mention of a *Metropolis*, or chief City, *Ephesus*, and mention of a *Church* in that *City*: The *Church* of *Ephesus*, yet here is no mention of a *Metropolitan Bishop*, or *any Bishop* at all, as certainly there would have been, if there had been a *Bishop or Superintendant* over that *Church*; but the Holy-Ghost plainly tels us, that that Church was governed by a *Consessus Presbyterorum*, by a company of *Elders*, who did govern *Communi Consilio*, and all and every one of those *Elders* were equally ἐπίσκοποι, and that *Jure Divino*: *Not one Bishop, and the rest of them Elders of an inferior order.*

To these Elders thus assembled *Paul* gives his *Ultimum Vale*, in this *pathetical parting Speech.* Wherein

First, He looks back to the course of his Ministry already past among them, ver. 18. 21.

Secondly, He looks forward to his approaching Suffering and Martyrdom, ver. 22, 23, 24. Where he sheweth that he was a *Martyr. Animo, Voto, & Proposito*, already.

Thirdly, He tels them this is the last time that ever they shall behold him, ver. 25. And as *Samuel* when he was laying down his Office of Magistracy, appeals to the People concerning his integrity in the Magistracy, 1 *Sam.* 12. 3. So *Paul* here appeals to these concerning his uprightness, and faithfulness in the discharge of the Ministry. *Happy are those Magistrates, and Ministers that when they are leaving their Office and Imployment can make these appeals.*

Fourthly, He exhorts them unto a *due care*, First of *themselves*, and then of the *Flock* committed to them, upon a twofold account. First, because it was the

Flock over which the *Holy-Ghost* had made them *Overseeres*. Secondly, Because it is the *Flock* which *God hath purchased by his own Blood*, ver. 28.

Fifthly, He enforceth this *care* and *diligence* further, by a *prediction* of the *danger* which he saw threatning the *Church*, and the *Flock* of Christ among them, v. 29, 30.

Sixthly, He resumes the *Exhortation* again, and presseth it under another term, of *Watching*, and urgeth it by his own example, ver. 31.

Seventhly, He *fairly* and *piously* takes his *leave* of them in ver. 32. And afterwards propounds his own *example* again unto them for imitation; and so the action concludes on his part with *Prayer*, ver. 36. on their parts with *Tears*, ver. 37, 38. *A solemn and sad parting.* In the words of the 32. vers. you have,

First, The *Agent*, *I Paul*, by the appointment of God a *Minister*, once your *Minister*, now no longer like to be *your Minister*, nor *a Minister* unless in bonds. *I Paul*] There is the Agent.

Secondly, We have the *Act* [*Commend*] Our *English* word, *commend*, is ambiguous; sometimes it signifies to *praise* a person or thing, so 2 *Cor.* 3. 1. *Do we commend our selves? or need we, as some others, Epistles of commendation to you, or Letters of commendation from you?* Sometimes our *English* word, *Commend*, signifieth to *resign*, or *deliver up*, or *commit* a person or thing to the *care* or *trust* of another; so *Luke* 23. 46. *Father into thy hands I commend my Spirit.* But in the Original there is no ambiguity, the word that signifieth to *commend* by way of praise, is either παινέω, as *Luke* 16. 8. or παρίστημι, 1 *Cor.* 8. 8. or συνίστάω, *Rom.* 5. 8. and 16. 1. or συνιστάνω, 2 Cor. 3. 1. and 5. 12. but the word used to signifie *commending, by way of trust is* παραθήκη, as *Luke* 23. 46. *Acts* 14. 23. and that is the *word* here used in the *Text*, *I commend you*, that

that is, I *resigne you over, I deliver you up, I commit you to the Trust of God.* That is the second thing, the Act.

The Third thing is the *Subject* of this *Act*, or the *persons thus commended* [*You*] amplified by their *relative compellation*, *Brethren*, [*Brethren, I commend you to God*] It is clear that this relates to the *Elders* of the Church of *Ephesus*, and it is probable that some of the *Vulgar*, some of the *Plebs* might be there also; especially if they understood that *Paul* now sent for the *Elders* to take his *last leave* of them, doubtless some of the *Brethren and Church-Members* would willingly put themselves to the trouble of so small a journey to be present at this *solemn parting:* and if you consider well the words of the 20, 25, & 27 verses, methinks it is more than probable that there were present upon the place some of *Pauls ordinary hearers*, and *ordinary members of* the *Church*, as well as the *Elders*; therefore we may safely conclude that this, *you Brethren*, includes both *Elders* and *People. Brethren, I commend you.*

The fourth thing considerable, is, the *Person* to whom he doth thus *commend* these *Brethren*, and that is, first, *to God*, the *Wise*, the *Gracious*, the *Faithful*, the *Almighty* God: The *same God*, to whom with my *Lord* and *Master Jesus Christ*, I would *commend* my *spirit* if I were now *a dying*, into *his hands* I commend you. *I commend* you *principally*, and in the first place *to God*; and then secondly, and *subordinately*, to the *Word of his Grace*, as a *powerful means* and *instrument* of God unto you; *Brethren, I commend you to God, and the Word of his Grace.*

Fiftly, You have here the *Eulogie* of this *word, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among them that are sanctified* | which clause may either refer *to God*, I *commend* you *to God* who is able to

build you up, and give you an *inheritance* among them that are ſanctified; or to the *Word of his Grace*, *I commend you to God, and the Word of his Grace, which is able to build you up &c.* and ſo in the Original, τῳ δυναμένῳ λόγῳ τῆς χάριτος αὐτοῦ δυναμένῳ; that is, *God* is able by his *Word* to *build you up*, and bring you to Heaven: Or, The *Word of God* is able to *build you up in Grace*, and *bring* you to *Glory*.

Laſtly, You have the time *when* Paul doth thus ſtudiouſly and ſolemnly commend the *Brethren* to *God*, and to the *Word of his Grace*, and that is, *Now*, Now that I am *departing from you*, never to ſee your faces more; *Now* that after my departure *grievous Wolves ſhall enter among you*. *Now, Brethren, I commend you to God, and to the Word of his Grace, which is able to build you up, and give you an inheritance among all them that are ſanctified.*

Which words will afford *variety* of *Obſervations*.

Firſt, For the term of Compellation, [*Brethren.*] This term, *Brother*, or *Brethren*, ſaith *Hierom*, *quadrupliciter accipitur*, is taken four manner of wayes.

1. Firſt, For thoſe that are born of the *ſame Parents*.

2. Secondly, For thoſe that are of the *ſame Linage*, though not of the *ſame immediate Parents*; thoſe whom we call *Couſins*, are uſually in Scripture called *Brethren* and *Siſters*.

3. Thirdly, For thoſe of the *ſame Nation*.

4. Fourthly, For thoſe of the *ſame Religion* and *Profeſſion*.

5. To which we may add, fifthly, For thoſe of the *ſame place* and *co-habitations*: Thus *Lot* calls the men of *Sodom*, *Brethren*, Gen. 19. 7.

6. Sixthly, They are called *Brethren*, that are of a *like quality* and *diſpoſition*: ſo *Prov.* 18. 9. *He that*

is ſlothful in his work, is [*Brother*] *to him that is a great waſter.*

Here it is uſed upon no other but upon a *Religious* Account. The Apoſtle calls theſe Perſons here preſent, *Brethren*, becauſe *he* and *they*, had *one Lord, one Faith, one Baptiſm, one God and Father*; therefore *Brethren.*

If we ſuppoſe this Compellation uſed to the Elders of the Church of *Epheſus*, then we may reade in it the *exceeding great humility* and *condeſcenſion* of the bleſſed Apoſtle *Paul*, who though he was advanced to an Office and Dignity of *higheſt Eminency* of any that ever Chriſt inſtituted in his Church, even the Office of an *Apoſtle*; which is another manner of Title and Dignity, than that either of *Biſhop* or *Arch-Biſhop*, or *Patriarch*, or *Cardinal*, or *Pope*: And though the Apoſtle ſufficiently underſtood how to magnifie this Office of his, when neceſſity or occaſion required it, *Rom.* 11. 13. yet ſo *modeſt* and *humble* is the Apoſtle, that he doth not diſdain to give unto a company of *poor plain Presbyters* or *Elders* of the *Church*, that were in Office, and (queſtionleſs) in Gifts and Graces many degrees inferiour to the Apoſtle, yet I ſay, he doth not diſdain to give unto them the title and reſpect of *Brethren.*

So that other Apoſtle *Peter*, whom the *Papiſts* forſooth would fain have to be the *Prince of the Apoſtles*, and *Head of the Church*, ſee what modeſt language he uſeth to the Elders of the Church, 1 *Pet.* 5. 1. *The Elders that are among you I exhort, who am alſo* συμπρεσβύτερος, *a fellow-Elder with your ſelves.* One would think it would have ſounded better, and more like the Prince of the Church, to have ſaid, *We will and require you, We* Peter *by divine diſpenſation, Prince of the Apoſtles, Head of the Church, the Vicar of Chriſt, to whom the Keys of Heaven are given, We will and require, We charge and command*

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the Elders that are among you to feed the Flock of God. This indeed is more according to the *language* and *genius* of those that pretend to be the *Successors* of *Peter*, and of the Apostles. But those *Primitive* and *purer* times knew no such *distance* betwixt the Ministers of the Gospel; nor no such *Lordliness* of the one over the other; the *highest Officer* in the Church looking upon the *lowest*, as *Brethren* and *Fellow-Elders*.

These *gracious and holy Souls* had not yet forgotten the Words of their Lord and Master, *Luke* 22. 25. *The Kings of the Gentiles* [κυριευουσι, αὐτων] *lord it over them, and they that exercise Authority upon them, are called* εὐεργέται, *Benefactors.* Ὑμεῖς δὲ οὐχ οὕτως, *But as for you it shall not be so; but he that is greatest among you, let him be* ὡς ὁ νεώτερος, *as the younger,* καὶ ὁ ἡγούμενος. *And he that is, Ruler or Governor among you,* ὡς ὁ διακονῶν, *as the Deacon*, or *Minister*, or *Servant*. The Servants of Christ had not yet forgot these Words of their Lord and Master, *Necdum effusum erat venenum in Ecclesiam.* But the *Apostles* of Christ walked in the steps of their *Lord* and *Master*, being *meek* and *lowly of heart*, Matth. 11. 29. and thereby approving themselves to be the *true Ministers of Christ*. Whereas *Pride* and *disdain* of others, is a property and badge not of the *Servants* of *Christ*, but of *Antichrist*.

It is a notable Story, that which *Beda* tels in the second Book of his *Ecclesiastical History* and the second chapter, that when *Austin* the *Monke*, whom some are ambitious to make the Apostle of *England*: When he was sent by *Pope Gregory* the great to preach to the *Angles* or *Saxons* that dwelt in this Land, he found a considerable company of the *Britans*, the ancient and native Inhabitants of this Country, professing the *Faith of the Lord Jesus Christ*, and living religiously and devoutly, only differing from the then Church of *Rome* in some

some *Circumstances*, as in point of the keeping of *Easter* and some *Ceremonies used in Baptism*, & the like; whereupon he called a *Council*, or a *Synod*, and invites the *Britans* thither, and accordingly divers of the most Learned and Religious among them applied themselves to the journey; but in the way they judged it convenient to take the advice of one that was of great Eminency for *Prudence*, and *Holiness* of life, *et Anachoreticam ducebat vitam*, and to enquire of him whether they should be perswaded by *Austin* to leave their *ancient Customs*, and follow his, or no. His answer to them was, *Si Homo Dei sit, sequimini eum*; If he be a man of God, follow him. But say they, How shall we be sure of that. Why, saith he again, *Our Lord saith, Take my Yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly of heart.* If therefore, saith he, this *Austin* be *meek* and *lowly* of heart, it is a sign that he hath taken the *Yoke of Christ upon him, and offers no other yoke to you*; but if he be *superbus & immitis*, if he be haughty and proud, *Constat eum non esse de Deo*; it is manifest that he is not of God, neither are ye to regard what he saith. But, say they again, How shall we know this, how shall we know whether he be *proud* or *lowly*? Why, saith he, order it so, that *He* and *his Party* may come first to the place of meeting, and if when you come in, he *riseth up to you*, know that he is the *Servant of Christ*, and *hear* him *obediently*. But if he *despise* you, and will not so much as *rise off his seat* to you, do you *despise* him. *Fecerunt ut dixerat.* They did as he directed them; and *Austin* not rising up to them at their coming in, they concluded him a *proud man*, and set themselves the more to oppose him.

But if we enlarge the *Persons*, and take in not only the *Elders*, but the *rest of the Church*, supposing them present upon the place, as I have shewed before, we have

have probable cause to do, than the term *Brethren*, may afford unto us this Observation.

Obs. *That there is a near relation, even the relation of Brethren, between Preachers and People, founded upon the account of Religion and Grace.*

This *near relation* is sometimes expressed under the notion of *Father* and *Children*. *I speak unto you, as unto my Children*, 2 Cor. 6. 13. *My little Children, with whom I travel in birth*, Gal. 4. 19. *I have no greater joy than to hear that my Children walk in Truth*, 3 John 14. Sometimes this *near relation* is expressed under the notion of a Nurse and Children; so 1 *Thess.* 2. 7. *But we were gentle among you, even as a Nurse cherisheth her Children.* But most ordinarily and frequently it is expressed by this notion of *Brother*, or *Brethren*; this is the Compellation wherewith the Apostle and other Ministers of the Gospel do ordinarily salute their People, both in their Preaching and in their Writings to them, as is obvious to all that reade the *Acts of the Apostles*, and their *Epistles*. Ministers and People they are *Brethren*, and that upon the account of *Religion* and *Grace*. They have the *same Father*, even *God*, who is pleased to own the *one* and the *other* for *his Children*. *For we are all the Children of God by Faith in Jesus Christ*, Gal. 3. 26. They have all *one Mother*; not *Rome*, nor *Antioch*, nor any other Church upon Earth, but the *Jerusalem which is above, the Mother of us all*, Gal. 4. 26. They have all *sucked the same breasts*, Isa. 66. 11. *That you may suck and be satisfied with the breasts of her Consolation.* They all *feed* at the *same Table, they eat the same Spiritual Bread, and drink the same Spiritual Drink*; 1 Cor. 10. *They all are Heirs of the same Promises, and wait for the same Inheritance*; I say, Ministers and People that are *true Believers* in all these respects therefore are *Brethren*. Only look as it is in a Family where

where there are many Children, many Brothers and Sisters, one of these is the *first-born*, and he, though a Brother, yet he is an *Elder-Brother*, and he hath some *Priviledges* above the rest. So it is here.

In the first Ages of the World the Priviledges of the first-born consisted in these three things.

1. That the *Publick* and *Solemn Worship of God* was *administred* in the Family, and for the Family, by the *First-born*; he was *Priest* and *Prophet* of the Family.

2. That next unto the Father himself the First-born was the *Prince* and *Governour* of the Family.

3. That a *double Portion* of the Estate went to the *First-born*, as his Inheritance.

And all these *Priviledges* were founded upon that *claim* which God made unto the *first-born*, as his right, upon which they were consecrated and set apart to *God*, *Exod.* 13.

Afterwards, all these Priviledges in the Church of the Old Testament were devolved upon the *Levites*, whom God took instead of all the *first-born* of *Israel*, Numb. 3. 12. And now in the Church of the New-Testament this *Honour* and these *Priviledges* are conferred upon the *Ministers of the Gospel*, whom God hath set in the place of the *Levites* under the *Law*, *Isa.* 66. 21. *I will take of them for Priests and Levites, saith the Lord.* So that now the *Ministers of the Gospel* they are as it were the *first-born Brethren*.

Now the Use of this may be,

First, To inform us, that the Authority and Power of Ruling, which Ministers have in the Church of God, *which is the House of God*, it is not *Despotical* or *Lordly*, or *Magisterial*, such as Superiours have over those that are absolutely and every way their Inferiours; but it is rather *Social*, such as one Brother hath over another, importing rather a *Priority* of *Order*, than an *Imparity* of

of *Degree*. The Apostle disclaims all such Power, οὐ κυριεύομεν, 2 *Cor.* 1. 24. *We are not Lords over your Faith, but Helpers of your Joy.*

Secondly, That Ministers and People, Preachers and Hearers are all *Brethren*: this shews what *endeared affections* Ministers and People ought to bear each to other. How dearly ought every Minister of the Gospel to *love* the People to whom he is sent; they are his *Brethren*, and how dearly ought the People of God to *love* and *reverence* every Minister of God that is sent among them! he is their *Brother*, their *Elder Brother*.

As it is in the *Conjugal Relation*, so it is in this. There are some duties *proper* to the *Husband*, some *proper* to the *Wife*, but *Love* is a duty *equally* incumbent upon them both. So it is here. There are Duties indeed *proper* to the *Preacher* as a *Preacher*, some *proper* to the *People* as *Hearers*; but *Love* is a Duty *equally incumbent* upon them both, as they are *Brethren*; the Preacher must love the People dearly as his Brethren. So *Paul* professeth abundance of Love to the *Corinthians*, 2 *Cor.* 2. 4. And so to the *Philippians*, *Phil.* 1. 8. *God is my Record how greatly I long after you all, in the Bowels of Christ Jesus.* So acknowledging their love to him, 2 Cor. 8. 7. —*Ye abound in your Love to us.* And *Col.* 1. 8. —*Who also declared unto us your Love in the Spirit.*

I am not come hither this day to justifie, or commend my self, for my Love to *you of this place*, though I think I might with *modesty* say, I have given *some proof* of my *Love unto you*, not only by my *constant Ministry among you*, but by *denying so many and so great Preferments as I have done for your sakes*; neither is it my design to commend you, or to praise you to your faces, for your Love to me, for that mutual and reciprocal Love that hath been between us, blessed be God; for

what

what hath been wanting on either ſide, let us be humbled.

Thirdly, This may let us ſee, that where there is this *Brother-like*, mutual affection between *Miniſter* and *People*, *there the taking away of Miniſter and People one from another cannot but be very grievous.* What a lamentation doth *David* take up over *Jonathan* upon this account, 2 *Sam.* 1. 26. *I am greatly diſtreſſed for thee, my brother Jonathan*; there is the root and bottom of his grief, his *brother Jonathan* was ſnatched away from him by death: *I am greatly diſtreſſed for thee, my Brother* Jonathan; *very pleaſant waſt thou unto me:* there was *David's* love to *Jonathan*, *thy love to me was wonderfull, paſſing the love of women*, there was *Jonathan's love* to *David*, there was no love loſt between the one and other; and where there is ſuch *love* there cannot but be *grief at parting. Methinks I hear ſome Congregations* (though it may be, not many) *in England thus bewailing their Miniſters, that are now civilly ſlain, We are greatly diſtreſſed for thee, O Brother, very pleaſant wert thou to us, thy words were pleaſant words: for the Preacher ſought to find out acceptable words, and that which was written was upright, even words of truth*, Eccleſ. 12. 10. They that have had ſuch Preachers, may well ſay, *very pleaſant haſt thou been unto us*; and ſome may adde further, *Thy Love was wonderful, paſſing the love of Women*; and here certainly there muſt be a *heavy parting.*

Fourthly, If *Preachers* and *People* are *Brethren*, Here then *behold how good and pleaſant a thing it is for Miniſters and People to dwell together in Unity*; As it is ſaid of *Brethren*, Pſal. 133. and therefore muſt be true here. And on the contrary, how *unprofitable*, how *unpleaſing*, and how *unbecoming* Jarrs and *Diviſions* between *Miniſter* and *People* are. Their contentions are

like

like the *bars of a Caſtle*, ſaith the holy Ghoſt of the contentions of Brethren, *Prov.* 18. 19. what then are the Contentions of *Miniſters* and *People*?

Fiftly, That *Miniſters* and *People* are *Brethren*, only *Miniſters* they are the *Elder Brethren*, they are the *firſt born of Brethren*. This may ſerve as a *glaſs to let us ſee the ſad aſpect of the preſent Judgment that is upon this Nation*. There are *two thouſand Miniſters in England ſmitten and ſlain at once*, as to their *Miniſterial Office*, and *Relation*: Methinks this *Judgment* ſeems to be like the *laſt and ſoreſt Judgment that God brought upon Egypt, when He ſlew all the firſt born in Egypt in one night*: ſo here, God hath ſlain not *one* or a *few*, but *many* indeed of the *Firſt-born* in *England* in one day; there God did it *Immittendo*, here *Permittendo*, there by way of *Immiſſion*, here by way of *Permiſſion*: upon this occaſion, ſaith the Text, *there was a great cry in Egypt*, Exod. 12. 30. And methinks, *there ſhould be no ſmall cry in England at this time*. And yet *behold*, and *remember*.— But I forbear, and go on.

And now Brethren, I commend you to God.] *Paul* being now to take his laſt leave of theſe precious People, making account never to to ſee them, nor ſpeak unto them more, what doth he do? He *commends* them to *God*. *And now, Brethren, I commend you unto God.*

Whence obſerve, *That it becomes Miniſters, eſpecially when they are to leave their People, and foreſee they ſhall leave them in danger of Wolves, to commit and commend them unto God.*

It is true, it is the *Duty* of Miniſters to be *alwayes* commending their People unto God. So *Paul*, Rom. 1. 9. *God is my witneſs, whom I ſerve with my ſpirit, in the Goſpel of his Son, that without ceaſing I make mention of you alwayes in my prayers.* So Eph. 1. 16. *I ceaſe not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers.*

So

So 1 Theſſ. 1. 2. *We give thanks unto God always for you, making mention of you always in our prayers.* Thus Miniſters muſt *always* do; but *eſpecially when they are leaving of them*, and know withal they ſhall leave them in *danger of Wolves*. If there were no other *proof* of this in Scripture, the *Practice* and *Example of the cheif Shepherd* and *Biſhop of ſouls*, the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, is enough to inforce this unto us; for you find that *when Jeſus knew that his hour was come that he ſhould depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them to the end*, Joh. 13. 1. and, as the laſt act of his Love, he *commends* them to the Father at his departure, in that comfortable and heavenly Prayer of his which we have recorded, *John* 17. 11. *And now I am no more in the world, but theſe are in the world; Holy Father, keep through thine own Name thoſe whom thou haſt given me.* And ſo again, *ver.* 15. *I pray not that thou ſhouldſt take them out of the world, but that thou ſhouldſt keep them from the evil*, or from the *evil one*. Thus we ſee *our Saviour* commended his Diſciples to his Father; and ſo ſhould *we* do. And that,

Firſt, To *teſtifie* our *faithfulneſs* to *God*.

Secondly, To *teſtifie* our *love* to the *People*.

Firſt, To *teſtifie* our *faithfulneſs* to *God*, and that for two Reaſons.

1. Becauſe they are *primarily* and *originally God's Flock*, His *peculiar People*, and *by him committed* to our *Truſt* and *Care*. To whom therefore ſhould we commit them when we leave them, rather than *to him to whom they do belong, and from whom we have received them?* This our *Saiour* pointeth at in *John* 17. 6. *Thine they were, thou gaveſt them me.* So again ver. 9. *I pray for them which thou haſt given me, for they are thine.* and ver. 11. *Keep through thine own Name, them which*

thou hast given me. The *interest* that God hath in them, and *our receiving them from God*, that is one *Reason* why we *Ministers* should *commit* and *commend unto God* the People we have received from him, before we leave them.

2. It becomes Ministers, especially when they are to leave their People, and foresee dangers threatning them, to *commit* and *commend* them to God: Because, *they are accountable to God for their Peoples souls*, Heb 13. 17. *They watch for your souls as they that must give an account.* As *Jacob* was accountable to *Laban* for all the Sheep that were under his hands, if any were stolen, or torn, or lost by going astray, *Jacob* must answer for it; so it is with *Ministers*, they are accountable to God for their Peoples souls: And therefore it is fit, that when they leave their People, they should *commend* them to God, to whom they are *accountable* for them.

Secondly, It becomes Ministers when they are leaving their People to commend them to God, that so *they may testifie their love to their Peoples souls.* This being the best, and indeed the only *provision* they can make for them, because God is every way able to keep those that are thus *committed* to him, He is *infinite* in *Wisdom*, in *Power*, in *Watchfulness*, in *Tenderness*, in *Faithfulness*, therefore it becomes *Ministers* when they are leaving their People, thus to commit them to God. Now this may serve,

In the first place, by way of *apology for those many Ministers that at this time have been forced to leave their stations*, I know there want not some that blame them, and think they have not shewed that *love* to the souls of their Flocks that they should have done, methinks I hear some ready to take up the Ministers of Christ, as *David's* elder brother took up him, 1 *Sam.* 17. 28. *I*

know

know thy pride, and the naughtineſs of thy heart, And with whom haſt thou left thoſe few Sheep in the Wilderneſs? here poor *David* ſtands arraigned at the Bar of his angry brother, of *pride and naughtineſs of heart*, and *wilful neglect* of the Flock committed to his care; when he, poor man, had done nothing but by the *command* of his father: And is not this the cenſure paſſed upon many of God's faithful Miniſters in their ſufferings at this time? *It is* (ſay ſome) *their pride, and the frowardneſs and peeviſhneſs of their hearts, and what do they think ſhall become of thir Flocks, when they thus leave their charges?* when we have done nothing but by the appointment and commandment of God, who hath commanded us *not to do evil that good may come of it.* And to them that demand with whom we have left thoſe *few Sheep?* We anſwer, *We have commended them to God*, his they were, he gave them us; and now he having no more need of us, we have reſigned them up again unto him. But,

In the ſecond Place, *This may ſupport and comfort the People of God under this preſent diſpenſation of God towards them, even the taking away of their Miniſters*, which cannot but be very grievous unto them. You ſee here how full of grief the People were at the thoughts of *Paul's* being taken from them, *they all wept ſore*, ver. 37, 38. *and fell on Paul's neck and kiſſed him, ſorrowing moſt of all for thoſe words which he ſpake, ſaying, that they ſhould ſee his face no more.* That was it wounded them to the heart, that *Paul* was now taking his laſt leave, *never to ſee their faces more.* The like you find *Acts* 21. the *Church in Ceſarea*, when they heard that *Paul* was going to *Jeruſalem*, and that Bonds and Trouble were there appointed for him, they fell a diſſwading him from his *Voyage*, and that with abundance of tears, in ſo much that *Paul* was faine to ſhake them

off with a kind of anger, saying, *What mean ye to weep, and to break my heart, I am ready not to be bound only, but to dye at Jerusalem for the Name of the Lord Jesus.* Methinks I hear those good Souls mourning to one another thus in secret: *Alas, that ever we lived to see this day! That ever by our own unthankfulness, and unprofitableness under such a Ministry, as Paul's, we should provoke God to take such a blessed instrument from us, and from his Churches! That our not walking worthy of the Light should provoke the Lord to let such a Light be taken out of the Candlestick, and put under a Bushel; it is our not walking worthy of the Gospel that imprisons this precious Servant of God, more than any crime of his, or the malice and rage of his adversaries the* Jews; *they could have no power to touch him, if we by our unfruitfulness had not made our selves unworthy of him, and of his Ministry.* Methinks I hear them thus bemoaning themselves, methinks I see a company incircling *Paul*, as in a Ring, and pleading with him, *Good Sir, consider, if not your self, yet consider us; if you go up to* Jerusalem, *and there be laid in Prison, as the holy Ghost foretells you will, what do you think will become of us? Who shall carry on that Work, which you have been the happy Instrument under God to begin in us? You are our Father, you have begotten us again to God by his Gospel; if you leave us, what will become of us? never were poor fatherless children left in a more miserable condition than we are left in; If you leave us, who shall instruct us, who shall encourage and carry us on in the wayes of Grace and Holiness? who shall arm us against the temptations of Satan, against the errors and snares of Seducers? Who shall quiet our troubled Consciences, who shall build us up in Faith, and in the comforts of the holy Ghost, if you leave us? Besides, we have Children that are yet in their sins, and what will become of their souls, what means is there for their conversion, if* Paul, *and such as* Paul *be taken from us?*

Talibus atq; aliis in qua dolor ipse desertos fecerat.

With these, and such like things, did these Christians set upon *Paul*, to perswade him to stay among them, but you see all in vain.

And some such pangs as these possibly may be upon the hearts of some of God's People at this time in *England*, there may be here and there one that may sit solitary and sorrowful, bewailing their *Minister*, as he did the Prophet, *O my Father, my Father, the Chariots of Israel, and the Horsmen thereof.*

But stay, my Brethren, we are not your *Fathers*. Matth. 23. 9. *Call no man your Father upon Earth; for one is your Father, which is in Heaven.* Alas, Brethren, we Ministers are not your Fathers, it is too honourable a title for us to take: truly, and properly, and in a spiritual sense, *God* only is your *Father*, he it is that *begets you of his own good will by the Word of Truth*, Jam. 1. 18. Though indeed that Word be dispensed by us as instruments, and when he hath thus begotten you, he is pleased to trust and honour us so far, as to make us *Foster-Fathers* and *Nursing-Fathers* to you, and this cannot but beget some kind of *Affections* and *Respect* in us to you, and in you to us, as there is between *Nurse-Fathers* and *Nurse-Children*, and a *lothness to part*. But I beseech you, consider, If a *King* that hath had a *Child at Nurse* some years in a private house, judge it convenient to part the *Child* and *Nurse* one from another, and the Nurse-Father upon notice given of the King's mind, carries the Child home, and delivers it up into the King's own arms, who is the true and proper Father, and is a thousand times better able to provide for the Child than the Nurse-Father, and more engaged to do it too: hath this poor Child any hurt, or any cause to complain, or to cry after the Nurse-Father, *I will go home to my Father again?* Think, my

Brethren, the caſe is the ſame here. We have been *Nurſing-Fathers* to you for ſome time, God ſeeth it fit to make a change, who are we that we ſhould murmur, or find fault? or, what cauſe have you to complain? *We reſign you up into the hands of your Father, and our Father, your God and our God.* Why ſhould you cry after us, are you not well enough? can you be better than in the arms of your dear, gracious and mercifull Father?

Obj. But what ſhall we do for *Ordinances*? how ſhall we live? who ſhall feed and nouriſh our poor ſouls?

Anſ. You that do indeed love, and prize, and hunger after the *Ordinances*, I will ſay to you, as *Abram* did in another caſe, *My ſon, God will provide.* As for the reſt of you, you that neither loved the *Ordinances* while you had them, nor have been at all quickened by the withdrawing of them, what God will do with you I cannot tell. But you that love and prize the *Ordinances*, I ſay to you concerning your ſouls, as our Saviour concerning your bodies, *Take no thought what you ſhall eat, and what you ſhall drink, nor how your poor ſouls ſhall live in a time of ſtraitneſs and ſcarcity.* That God, that when *Iſrael* were in ſuch a place as they could neither *ſow* nor *reap*, fed them with bread from Heaven; that God, if he bring you into ſuch a condition, as you can neither enjoy *Word* nor *Sacraments*, will feed you too with *hidden Manna*, that ſhall be better than *Word* and *Sacraments*; that God, who multiplied the Meal in the Widows barrel, and the Oyl in her cruſe; that though her ſtock was little, yet it ſerved turn, and laſted as long as the famine laſted. So I dare confidently ſay it ſhall be with you that fear God in Truth, and love his *Ordinances* in ſincerity, the leſs your ſtock of Grace in your own eyes be, be it very little and ſmall, it ſhall hold out till you come to Hea-

ven,

ven, *your handful of Meal and your cruise of Oyl shall not fail.* As for the rest of People in this Place and Nation, what God will do with them I know not, I am loth to speak what I see cause to fear, even concerning this very place; But I shall *commend you to God*, after I have spoken a little of what follows.

And the Word of his Grace.] Mark here, the Apostle doth not say, I commend you to God, and the *impulse of his Spirit*; or, I commend you to God, and the *Light within*; or, I commend you to God, and the *Traditions of men*; or, I commend you to God, and the *Customs and Orders of the holy Church*: No, these are some of them *uncertain*, others of them *unprofitable* things. But we have a *more sure Word*, 2 Pet. 1. 19. A profitable Word, a Word *able to make wise to Salvation*, even the *Holy Scriptures*, and to this, next under God, and in joynt co-operation with God, for the good of their souls, doth the Apostle commend these Christians: *I commend you to God, and the Word of his Grace.*

From thence observe, *That the Word of God, it is the Word of God's Grace.* So we find it stiled, not onely here, but in *Acts* 14. 3. *They gave testimony to the Word of his Grace.* So in chap. 20. ver. 24. it is called, *The Gospel of the Grace of God.* And the Word of God is the Word of his Grace, upon this fourfold account.

Reas. 1. *Because it comes from Grace.* It was the meer Free-Grace of God that moved him to reveal, and give forth this Word of his, as a Revelation of himself unto the children of men. *Adam* was at first created in such a condition as he needed not a word without to lead him into the true knowledge of the true God. He was created *after the Image of God, in Knowledge, Righteousness and Holiness*, he had the Law of God written in his heart: And as the *High Priest* of old having the *Urim* and *Thummim* upon his breast,

needed but cast his eye upon that, and he might presently know any thing, that he had a mind to know of God. So *Adam* in his innocency it was for him but to reflect upon himself, to cast his eye inward, and presently he might know of God, and of his Mind and Will that which he did desire. But as the *Urim* and *Thummim* being lost in the destruction of *Jerusalem* by the *Babylonians*, God was pleased, as the *Rabbins* tell us, to favour his People with a *vocal* answer from the Oracle, which they called בת קול *Bathcol*, a voice without them, instead of inward light and inspiration. So this innate light of the knowledge of God being extinct and lost by that universal ruine which the sin of *Adam* hath brought upon all mankind, and all mankind now being nothing but blindness and darkness, *alienated from the Life of God through the ignorance that is in them*, Ephes. 4. 18. able at the best but to *feel* and *grope after God*, as the Apostles expression is, *Acts* 17. 27. even as the men of *Sodom* when they were struck with blindness groped to find the door of *Lot*'s house til they wearied themselves, but were never able to find it, Gen. 19. 11. So it is with all men now by Nature, therefore the Lord who is said to *dwell in Light inaccessible*, 1 Tim. 6. 16. and who is a *Fountain* of pure Light *inexhaustible*, (1 John 1. 5.) hath pleased to display unto his poor creatures some beams of his own Light, and that in such a refracted way, as their weak nature may be capable of, without being overwhelmed and swallowed up with that Glory. And to this end hath treasured up those Beams of Light in his holy Scriptures, from whence they dart forth unto us, not all at once, and in their fulness, but *gradatim*, and by little and little, as we are able to bear them, and take them in. And because this Discovery which God makes of himself to sinful and fallen man, by his holy

Word,

Word, is an *Act of meer Grace*, which Man had no wayes merited, nor could merit, nor God could no wayes be obliged or engaged to; therefore this Word of God is called the *Word of his Grace*, in respect of the *original* of it, it came forth from God, it was the Grace of God that first revealed it.

Reas. 2. *It is the Word of Grace materially, because the Grace of God towards sinners in Jesus Christ is the principal, proper, and specifick matter and subject of it.* True it is indeed, that πᾶν τὸ γραφὲν τῶ θεῶ. All that can possibly be known of God is revealed in the Word. The simplicity, unity, perfection of his Essence, the glorious Mystery of the Trinity of Persons, the Wisdom, Power, Goodness, Justice, Holiness of God, all these are made known to us in his Word, *wherein, as in a glass, we behold the glory of the Lord*, 2 Cor. 3. 18. But that which the Word doth principally and chiefly reveal, it is the *Grace of God towards sinners in Jesus Christ*, this was the substance of that πρωτ-ευαγγέλιον, that *first Word* which God revealed immediately after the Fall of Man in Paradise, *The Seed of the Woman shall break the Serpents head.* This was the substance and scope of all the Old Testament, all the *Sacrifices, Laws*, and *Ordinances*, concerning *holy Persons*, and *holy things*, they all tended to this. And this is more clearly and fully the scope of the Gospel and New Testament, to make known the *unsearchable Riches of Christ*, as the Apostle speaks, *Ephes.* 3. 8. And therefore of all the parts of the Scripture, the Gospel, the New Testament, is, ἱλαστικὸς, & ἱλασμαστικὸς, called the *Word of Grace*, and the *Gospel of Grace*, because the whole design and scope of that, is, to reveal and make known unto sinners the Grace of God in Christ, and that, and that alone reveals it: Men may talk what they please of those *Universal Preachers*, the *Sun*, *Moon* and

and *Stars*, and tell us that they preach Christ. The creatures indeed do sufficiently reveal God, so as to leave all the World without excuse, for not fearing and serving of God who made Heaven and Earth, but worshipping the work of their own hands in his stead; but Christ, and the Grace of God towards sinners in Christ, is the proper, peculiar, sole Revelation of the Gospel, which therefore is called the *Word of Grace*.

Reas. 3. *The Word of God is the Word of Grace effectively*, because it works inherent qualitative Grace and Holiness in them that hear it, not indeed in all; the Word doth not work Grace in the hearts of all, nor never did. No, but where-ever Grace is wrought in the hearts of any, there ordinarily it is the *Word* that works; and therefore it may be justly and duely called the *Word of Grace*. So the Apostle, *Rom.* 10. 17. *Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.* So *Gal.* 3. 2. *Received you the Spirit by the works of the Law, or by the hearing of Faith?* So our Saviour, *John* 17. 17. *Sanctifie them through thy Truth, thy Word is Truth.* So then the *Word* worketh *Faith* and *Sanctification* in the hearts of God's Children, and therefore it is the *Word of Grace*.

Reas. 4. *The VVord of God is the VVord of Grace; because it not only begets and begins Grace, and layeth the foundation of it, but it maintains, and increaseth, and carrieth on the work of Grace unto Glory.* As it follows here in the Text, *The VVord of his Grace, which is able to build you up, and give you an inheritance among all them that are sanctified.*

Now this in the first place, should teach us to *bless God for the enjoying of his VVord, more than for any other our Enjoyments whatsoever.* It is true, we have cause to bless God for any thing, for every thing we enjoy; that we have bread to eat, though never so course; that

we

we have rayment to put on, though never so mean; we have cause to bless God, that we live in a Land of Hills and Valleys, that is watered with Springs, and with the Dew of Heaven, in a fruitful and plentiful Land; but that we live in a Land whither God hath caused the *Word of his Grace* to come: this we have cause to bless God for infinitely more, than for *Corn*, and *Wine*, and *Oyl* in greatest abundance.

Had God inriched this Nation with all the *Mines* and *Treasures* of both the *Indies*; were all the Hills, and High-wayes in *England* as full of Gold as they are of Sand; were all the Rivers as full of Pearls as they are of Pebles; did Cinamon and Cassia grow in *England* as thick as Bulrushes; were all the Riches and Glories of the World laid up here as in Natures Storehouse; yet if God had hid the *Word of his Grace* from us, what a miserable Nation had we been! all this our Wealth would have exposed us to the cruel covetousness and rage of other Nations, as it hath done the poor *Indians*, and have sent us down to Hell certainly and unavoidably without any help or remedy.

But blessed be God for the *Gospel of Grace*, for *this VVord of Grace blessed be God*; blessed be God for the Word of Grace bestowed upon *England*, he hath not dealt so with every Nation: *In England is God known, his Name is great in* England; *in* England *is his Tabernacle, and his Dwelling-place in* England: *He hath not dealt so with every Nation, he hath not dealt so with any Nation. Praise ye the Lord.* Psal. 147. 20.

In the second place, *This should teach us above all things, to fear and deprecate the taking away the VVord of Grace from us, or from our posterity after us.* It was a sore Judgment which the Lord threatned against *Judah*, *Jer.* 16. 5. *I have taken away my Peace from this People, saith the Lord, my Loving-kindness and Mercy.*

O my Brethren, when God takes away the *VVord of his Grace* from a People, then is this direful Judgment come upon them, then hath God taken away his Peace from that People, even Loving-kindneſs and Mercy; then is that People left, *Regnum Cyclopicum, in the Region of Darkneſs, and the ſhadows of death, an habitation for Dragons and Devils.* Take the *Sun* out of the Firmament, and what would the World be but a *Chaos* of Confuſion, a Land of Darkneſs? And, *ſatius eſſet Solem è Cœlo*, ſaid the People of *Conſtantinople* of that famous Preacher *Chryſoſtom*, *Better the Sun ſhould be taken out of the Skie, than* Chryſoſtom *out of the Pulpit. Chryſoſtom*, and an hundred *Chryſoſtoms* may be taken out of the Pulpit, and yet the *Word of Grace* not taken away: but if once the *VVord of Grace* be taken away, then *VVo, Wo, Wo to that Place, and to that People.*

Brethren, you may remember, I am ſure you ought to remember, that upon the 13th of *October*, 1658. from thoſe words, *Amos* 8. 11. I ſhewed you what a *heavy Judgment* it was to have the Word of God taken from you. I told you then, it may be ſome of you thought too peremptorily, *God would bring this Judgment upon this Nation, and this Congregation in particular*, I did bid you write it in a book, the Year, and Month, and Day when I ſpake it, therefore you may remember it. God after this prediction, waited the term of his Patience, mentioned *Luke* 13. 7. even three years, and then ſoon after God began to inflict this Judgment: O my Brethren, had that warning been believed and improved to *Humiliation, Repentance, cloſer Walking with God, higher prizing the Word and Ordinances, a ſtudy to walk worthy of the Goſpel and Grace of God*; aſſuredly, the evil threatned might have been prevented: but *where God hath ſealed a Decree for his Judgments, there Warnings do but harden the heart and haſten*

haſten the Judgment. When God had a purpoſe to deſtroy *Ahab*, *Micajahs* words ſhall bear no ſway with him. When God had a purpoſe to deſtroy *Jeruſalem*, there *Jeremiah*, *Ezekiel*, and all the *Prophets* ſhall be mocked, deſpiſed, ſlighted, laughed to ſcorn. O that it had not been ſo with us! Well Brethren, you were told of this before, you would not believe it then, *Will you believe it now? Now you begin to feel it, will you believe what you feel?* will you lay it to heart? will you give glory to God? if not I tell you *what you feel is yet nothing to that you are like to feel.* The firſt year of the Famine in *Egypt* was nothing ſo bad as the ſecond, nor that as the third, nor the third as the ſeventh, every year the Famine grew ſorer, and pinched harder and harder: Believe it, ſo it will be with you, you are not yet put to wander from Sea to Sea, and from Coaſt to Coaſt, to ſeek the Word of the Lord; but believe it, if theſe beginnings be not laid to heart, you will once, before God hath done with you, be brought to this; So the Text there ſaith plainly, *They ſhall go from Sea to Sea, and from Coaſt to Coaſt, to ſeek the VWord of the Lord, and ſhall not find it.* This Threatning God fulfilled upon the Church and People of the *Jews*, taking away the *Spirit* and *gift of Prophecy* from that Church, from the time of the Prophet *Malachi*, unto the birth of *John the Baptiſt*, which was between three and four hundred years; which is the thing pointed at in *Pſal.* 74. 9. *We ſee not our Signs, neither is there any more any Prophet.* And withal, at the ſame time God laid them under the ſoreſt Perſecutions for their *Religion*, that ever that Church and People met withal. The ſame Judgment hath once been upon this Nation, and upon the Chriſtian World already, God grant that our ſins do not bring it a ſecond time upon us. But,

In the third place, *Is the VWord of God the VWord of*

of his Grace? Then this reproves all those that have lived under the continual dispensation of this VVord of Grace, and yet have got no saving Grace, no saving good by it; but continue blind, ignorant, impenitent, hard-hearted, secure, unbelieving, unholy, and that under the constant preaching of the Word. O that such would in the fear of God consider,

First, *How dangerous their condition is.*

Secondly, *How great their Condemnation will be.*

First, Consider *how dangerous your condition is.* All you that live under the *VVord of Grace*, and get no saving Grace, no saving good by it. Reade that one Text, *Heb. 6. 7, 8. For the Earth that drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed*, (that is, answerable to their gift, and labours, and continuance) *is blessed of God. But that which bringeth forth briars and thorns, is near unto curfing*, (How near, and unto what *curfing* in this life, God only knows, but to be sure *their end* will be sad) *whose end is to be burned.* A fearful end, and such as should make the heart of every one who is guilty of being unfruitful under the *VVord of Grace*, tremble to think or hear of it; especially considering how little hope there is for such a one to escape *this curse*, and to escape this dreadful and dismal end: for if the *VVord of Grace*, that is the power of *God* himself unto Salvation, if that can do no good upon thee, what can? if that cannot work upon thy blind, ignorant, prophane hard heart, no not in ten, twenty, thirty, or forty years, what can? I tell thee, if thou art past getting good by the *VVord of Grace*, thou art past getting good by any thing at all. *Luke 16. 31. If they hear not* Moses *and the Prophets, neither will they hear though one from the dead were sent unto them.* If what thou heareſt from the *VVord of Grace*, of the *VVrath* of God

God againſt *impenitent ſinners*, and the *Grace* and *Mercy* of God towards poor *repenting ſinners*; if what thou readeſt and heareſt in and from the *VVord* of the *torments* of *Hell*, and of the *joyes of Heaven*; if what thou readeſt and heareſt from the *Word* of theſe things do not bring thee to *Repentance*, and *Faith* in the *Lord Jeſus*, nothing elſe will. No, though one ſhould come immediately out of *Hell*, with Hell-flames about his ears, and burning brimſtone dropping down at his heels, to warn thee, and fright thee from thoſe torments; or, if an *Angel* ſhould come from *Heaven*, cloathed with the Sun, and crowned with Stars, to allure thee to Holineſs by thoſe glorious Rewards; neither the one or the other will work upon thee to any purpoſe, if the *VVord of Grace* hath not wrought upon thee; for that is the Inſtrument that God hath appointed and ordained, and made fit and able to work Grace in the Soul; and therefore if that do not work upon thee, what canſt thou think will?

And if thou continue ſtill in this condition, not profiting by the *VVord*, without any ſaving work of the *VVord* upon thee, O conſider *how inexcuſable, how intolerable thy damnation will be.* Why doth our Saviour tell *Chorazin* and *Bethſaida*, and the reſt of the Cities where he had gone up and down preaching the *VVord of Grace*, that *it ſhould be more tolerable for* Sodom *and* Gomorrah, *for* Tire *and* Sidon *in the day of Judgement, than for them*, Mat. 11.22,24. But becauſe *Sodom* and *Gomorrah* never had the *Word of Grace* preached among them, as theſe Cities had had. *Turks* and *Heathens*, *Sodomites* and *Gomorrahns*, yea the Devil and his Angels ſhall have more to plead in excuſe of themſelves in the day of Judgement, than thoſe that have lived under the Word of Grace, and never did get any ſaving good by it.

Turks

Turks and *Heathens*, *Sodomites*; and *Gomorrahans* will be able to say, *Lord thou never sentest Prophets, or Apostles, or Ministers among us, to tell us of the danger of sin, or to call and summon us to Repentance; to make known to us thy Will and the wayes of Grace and Holiness; if thou hadst, we should never have gone on in our sins and impenitencie, we would certainly have laid hold upon the offers of Grace, and wayes of Life.* The Devil and his angels will be able to say, *Lord, thou didst never provide nor propound for us a way of reconciliation and recovery since we first sinned against thee, as thou didst for man after his transgression; if thy Son had taken our nature as he did the nature of man, and had provided for us such a Covenant of Peace and Reconciliation as he did for man, and the glad Tidings thereof had been published to us by the Gospel as it was to man, possibly we had not persisted so obstinately in our rebellion against thee.* These and the like pleas may even the Devils have for themselves in the day of Judgment, whither true or no, that is not our question. But now thou who hast lived all thy dayes under the Word of Grace, and never got any saving good by it, but livest and diest an ignorant, prophane, impenitent, unbelieving creature, as the Lord knows too many do: When thou shalt appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ, thou wilt not have this nor any thing else to plead for thy self. If Christ should say to thee, as Judges here upon the Bench to Malefactors, What canst thou say for thy self why sentence of condemnation should not pass upon thee? Poor creature, thou wilt not have one word to say, but must be as that man in the parable, *Mat.* 22. *Altogether speechless.* When the Judge shall say to you, How is it that you appear here in the guilt of all your sins? were you never told of these sins of yours? were you never exhorted to repentance? were you never

never directed the way to get your sins pardoned? were you never invited, perswaded, intreated that you would be saved? did I not send my Ministers, and did not they in my Name, and in my Stead, beseech you that you would be reconciled to God? and did not they tell you what you must do that you might be reconciled? did you not live under the dispensations of that *Word of Grace* that was able to *work Grace in you*, that did *work Grace* in others, and was as able to work it in you? why then are ye found in a *graceless* condition this day? O when *Jesus Christ* shall in the presence of all his *Saints* and *Angels* thus expostulate with the souls of such as live and dye without any saving good, how *inexcusable*, how *intolerable* will their condemnation be!

O think of it, and as you desire to escape the *confusion* of that day, and the *condemnation* of Hell, O labour yet to get Grace wrought in your hearts by the power of this *Word of Grace*.

In the fourth place. Is it so that the Word of God is the Word of Grace; O then *study this Word of Grace*.

Secondly, *Love this Word of Grace*.

Thirdly, *Cleave close to this Word of Grace*; make that the *Man of your counsels*, Psal. 119. 24. make it the *Rule of your lives*, Gal. 6. 16. But these and the like *Duties* I have heretofore spoken largely of, both in my Sermons upon *James* 1. 25. as also when I shewed you, how the *Word of God* is the *only true and adequate Rule of Godliness*. And lastly, in my *Catechistical Sermons*, wherein I handled largely the *Divine Original Authority and Perfection of the holy Scriptures*: I pass by these things therefore now,

And go on to the *Eulogie* or *Praise* which the *Apostle* here gives: *The Word of Grace, which is able to build*

you up.] A Metaphor taken from Builders, where you know first, men lay the Foundation, and then by degrees set up the whole Frame of the Building, one piece after another: to this *Paul* alludes here, as if he should say, as to the *Corinthians*, 1 Cor. 3. 10. *According to the Grace given unto me, I as a wise Master-builder have laid the Foundation.* I have by my Ministry setled you upon the *rock Christ Jesus.* Indeed the work is not yet finished, and yet I must leave you; but I resolve to leave you in a sure hand, who is able to carry on what I have begun. *I commend you to God, and the Word of his Grace, which is able to build you up.*

Three things we may observe from these words for our instruction.

The first is this; *That true Believers, those that are in the state of Grace, have need to be further edified and built up.*

Secondly, *That true Believers have need of the Word of God for their building up, and edification.*

Thirdly, *That the Word of God is able to build up true Believers.*

First, *That true Believers, those that are in the state of Grace, have need to be further edified, and built up.* And this I prove to you,

First, By those places of Scripture that do enjoyn the *edification*, or building up of the Saints as a Duty: so 1 *Thess.* 5. 11. *Wherefore comfort your selves together, and edifie one another.*

Secondly, By those places that suppose it the practice of the Saints, as in 1 *Thess.* 5. 11. *Edifie one another, as also you do*; so Jude 20. *But you Brethren, building up your selves in your most holy Faith, Praying in the Holy Ghost, keep your selves.* Col. 2. 6, 7. *As ye have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, rooted and built up in him.*

Thirdly,

Thirdly, This is proved by those places that *propound the edification, or building up of the Saints, as the end and scope of Gospel-Ordinances and Church-Administrations*, Ephes. 4. 11, 12. All the Officers that Christ hath given to his Church, and all Ministerial gifts bestowed upon those Officers, what is the end and scope of them? *The perfecting of the Saints, the edifying of the Body of Christ*: So the *power of Censures* in the Church, what is the end and scope of them? see 2 *Cor.* 13. 10. *According to the power which the Lord hath given me to edification; this ought to be the end and scope of all Church-Administrations.* 1 *Cor.* 14. 26. *Let all things be done to edifying.*

Fourthly, This is that, that ought to be theend and scope, not only of all Publick Administrations, but *of all a Christians private actions.* Rom. 14. 19. *Let us therefore follow the things that make for peace, and things wherewith one may edifie another.* So again, *Rom.* 15. 2. *Let every man please his neighbour, for his good to Edification.* Where,

First, We have the *Duty enjoyned; pleasing our neighbour.*

Secondly, We have the *universality of this Duty: Let every man please his neighbour.*

Thirdly, You have the *restriction* and *rule of this Duty; for his good to edification: Let every man please his neighbour for his good to Edification.* It is not simply said, *Let every man please his neighbour*; it would please the *Drunkard* well to have other men go to the Ale-house with him; the *Heretick* and *Superstitious* person would like it well to have every one speak, and do as they do: but we must not please others in these things, but only so far as may be for their real and true good, and for their *Edification*; so far we are bound to please them, and no further. So that Edification you

ſee here is the *rule*, and *ſcope*, and *boundary* of all our compliance with, and complacency to, in other men.

And ſo it is of *all the actions of our lives*. 2 Cor. 12. 19. *We do all things for your edifying*. Yea, this ought to be the ſcope and end of all our *words* as well as *actions*. Eph. 4. 29. *Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the uſe of edifying*. Not a word ſhould come out of a Chriſtians mouth, but what is good for Edification. Now would God, think you, thus enjoyn upon *Chriſtians* the care of *edifying one another*? would the Lord *Jeſus Chriſt* make *Edification* the *end* and *ſcope* of all *Church-Ordinances* and *Adminiſtrations*? would the *Holy Ghoſt* teach us to propound it, and make it the *ſcope* and *end* of all our *ſayings* and *doings*, next to *God's Glory*? would theſe things be, if God, who is infinitely wiſe, did not know that the Saints while they are in this life, have need of building up more and more?

Now the *Reaſons* why true Believers, thoſe that are in a ſtate of Grace, have yet further need to be built up and edified, are,

Firſt, *Becauſe God hath appointed a certain meaſure and proportion, and heighth of Grace, which all his Elect ſhall arrive at before they be taken up into Glory*. As a wiſe Builder who when he is about to build a houſe, he reſolves beforehand how many foot high he will raiſe it, to ſuch a meaſure, to ſuch a heighth, and then he will ceaſe: So God from all eternity hath decreed concerning every particular Believer, to ſuch or ſuch a degree of Grace he ſhall attain, and be built up, before he come to Heaven; this the Apoſtle calls *a Perfect man, and the meaſure of the ſtature of the fulneſs of Chriſt*, Eph. 4. 13.

Secondly, *God doth ordinarily promove and carry on his People to this meaſure and degree, whereunto he hath appointed*

appointed them, gradatim, *by little and little*. He doth not in the first instant and moment of their Conversion and Regeneration, make them perfect in their measure, and fit for Heaven: Indeed here and there one, God, to shew his Power, is pleased to convert and fit for Heaven, in one and the same moment of time, as the Thief upon the Cross, but ordinarily it is not so. I have read of some Children that have been born with hair upon their head and beard, as if they had arrived at their *virilis ætas*, as soon as born, but these are *inter variora & anomala Naturæ*; Here Nature steps out of her ordinary course, ordinarily it is not so. So it is here; Sometimes it falls out that a man is converted upon his *Death-bed*, or upon the *Gallows*, as the Thief was upon the Cross; here now Grace is wrought and perfected all at once, but this is *inter variora Gratiæ*: I will not say it is *anomalous*, for Grace is free, and bound to no rules; but this rarely comes to pass, except in *elect Infants*, dying in their infancy; but ordinarily God doth carry on the work of his Grace in his People to its appointed measure *by degrees*: Hence it is compared to *Leaven* that diffuseth it self through the Lump *by degrees*, Matth. 13. 33. *to Light*, that diffuseth it self through the Air *by degrees*, Prov. 4. 18. *to Corn*, that is first the *green blade*, then the *ear*, then the *ripe Corn*, Mark 4. 28. to a *Building* here, to which a man is every day adding something, and carrying on more and more to Perfection.

The Use of this shall be,

First, *To reprove those that dream of a Perfection they have attained already*; that boast themselves they are *perfect*, and free from sin, and consumate in Grace and Holiness; as perfect as ever they shall be, *as perfect as the Saints in glory*; yea, as *perfect as Christ*, *as God him-*

himself. Would these men content themselves to say, *they are as perfect as ever they shall be?* that were bold, and bad enough, though possibly it might prove too sadly true of some of them; but to say they are *as perfect as the Saints in glory*, as *perfect as Christ*, *as God himself*; this is to open their mouth against the *Heavens*, and to *blaspheme* not only the *Saints of the most High*, but the *most High himself*. How far was the *wisdom* and *humility* of *Paul* from this, *Philip.* 3. 12, 13. *Not as though I had already attained, or were already perfect, but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not my self to have apprehended, but this one thing I do, forgetting those things that are behind, and reaching forward to those things that are before; I pres towards the Mark for the price of the high Calling in Christ Jesus.* Blessed *Paul* that had been *wrapt up into the third Heavens*, and had *heard things unutterable*, yet he doth not count himself perfect, nor reckons that he had attained all that Grace which he must attain before he comes to make his eternal abode in Heaven; therefore he forgets, overlooks what he hath, and considers what he wants, *forgetting that which is behind, and reaching forth to that which is before, he presseth forward.*

Had some of those *self-conceited*, *self-deluded* poor souls, that dream so much of their own *perfection*, and talk of it as some men do in their dreams, had they I say been *wrapt* up with *Paul* into the *third Heavens*; they might have had some shadow of Reason to boast of their own *perfection*; but alas, poor creatures, they carry their own confutation about with them in their *crazie bodies*, and *distempred spirits*. O Brethren, take heed of this delusion, take heed of saying you have enough, you are perfect: I never read nor heard of any that said, I am *rich* and *increased in goods*, and

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lack nothing, but Christ answered them on the contrary, *Thou art poor, and blind, and naked, and miserable. He that saith he hath Grace enough before he come in Heaven, it is to be feared he hath none at all, nor will never come there.*

In the Second Place, therefore be exhorted: Seeing that true Beleivers have need of further building up, *O be exhorted to make it the great business of your lives, to build up your selves and one another towards perfection more and more.* You have heard this is that the *Holy-Ghost* enjoyns: *Edifie your selves*, and *edifie one another.* And let this, I beseech you, as you love your souls, be the *main* business of your lives; do not make it a business of the *By*, as many do, whose main design and business they drive, is for the world, and the things of the world; as for *edifying* themselves and one another, that is laid by for spare hours, when they have nothing else to do: but O my Brethren, make the *edifying* of your selves, and one another, the main design and intendment of your lives, make it your daily task and work, if you would not have the whole work of Grace in your souls decay, and run to ruine. If any of you now have a house in building, and had laid the foundation, begun to rear up the building, and so let it stand by, contented that your work-man should finish at his leasure, when he could spare time, when he had nothing else to do, Would not all the world condemn you as very improvident men, and negligent of your own concernments? O that men were but as wise for their souls, as they are for the world! O why should you neglect your souls? why should you suffer the building of Grace, which God hath begun to rear up in your souls, to decay and run to ruine, as it will certainly do? for, *Non progredi, est regredi*, Not to go forward, is to go backward. O therfore be adding daily, and doing some-

thing in your ſouls daily. Could the *Heathen Painter* be ſo intent and induſtrious upon his trade of Painting, that he could ſay, *Nulla dies ſine lineâ*, and all, that he might excell in that Art? And ſhall not Chriſtians be more intent upon, and more induſtrious in their attendance to the work of Grace in their ſouls? ſhall any day paſs them without ſomething done for their edification, and for the carrying on of the work of Grace in their hearts unto more perfection? O far be it, far be it from every true Chriſtan. *You Brethren, building up your ſelves in your moſt holy Faith, and praying alwayes in the Holy-Ghoſt, keep your ſelves in the Love of God.*

But you will ſay; *How ſhall we do that?* What can we do towards the *building up* of our ſelves? Why the following Doctrines will tell you that, the next whereof is this;

That the beſt of Chriſtians have need of the Word of God for their edification and building up. Therefore the Apoſtle here commends even the *Elders of Epheſus*, who were themſelves *Officers* of *Chriſt*, and *Builders* in the Church of Chriſt, the Apoſtle *commends them to the Word of Grace*: ſo the Apoſtle exhorts *Timothy*, 1 Tim. 4. 13. *Till I come give attendance to Reading, to Exhortation, to Doctrine.* Give attendance to reading; to reading what? certainly the holy Scriptures, the Word of God. *Timothy was one that had known the Scriptures of a Child*, 2 Tim. 3. 15. and that had received extraordinary Gifts of the holy Ghoſt by the laying on of the *Apoſtles hands*, 2 Tim. 1. 6. that was an Evangeliſt, a Preacher of the Goſpel to the Gentiles; yet even this *Timothy*, though thus qualified, gifted, and imployed, muſt ſtill *give attendance to reading*; not only reade now & then a chapter, but *give attendance to reading*, if he means to build up others, or to be himſelf built up in Grace and Holineſs: So that you ſee the beſt of

Chriſtians

Chriſtans have need of the Word of God for their building up, and edification.

That this was the deſign, and ſcope of God in cauſing his *Word* to be committed to writing, is clear, in 2 *Tim.* 3. 16, 17. *All Scripture is given by inſpiration from God, and is profitable for Doctrine, for Reproof, for Correction, for Inſtruction in Righteouſneſs: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furniſhed unto all good works*: There is the end why all Scripture was given, *that the man of God may be built up unto perfection.* And that this is the end why *Chriſt* hath inſtituted in his Church a publick Miniſtry, for the opening and applying of theſe Scriptures, is clear out of *Epheſ.* 4. 11, 12. *And he gave ſome Apoſtles, and ſome Prophets, and ſome Paſtors and Teachers, for the perfecting of the Saints, for the work of the Miniſtry, for the edifying of the body of Chriſt.* Now if the infinite Wiſdom of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt did not know that the beſt of his Servants would need his Word for their edification and building up, He would never have committed his Word firſt to writing, and afterwards have appointed a continual preaching of it in his Church, in ſeaſon and out of ſeaſon, as a means properly ſubſervient to their edification. We may conclude therefore; *That the beſt of Chriſtians have need of the Word for their edification and building up.*

And this, firſt, *condemns the Impiety of the Pope*, I ſay of the *Pope* rather than of the *Papiſts*; for the poor People ſuffer under this *Impiety* of the *Pope* and his *Clergy*, who deprive their *Laity*, as they call them, of the uſe and benefit of the *Scriptures*, making it a *Capital crime* for any of them to have the *Scriptures* in any common or ordinary language, *Italian*, *French*, *Spaniſh*, or the like. *Satan* himſelf could never have invented a more ſpeedy and effectual way for the deſtroying of ſouls than this is.

They

They pretend indeed for this wickedneſs of theirs, *reverence* to the Scriptures, and care of ſouls; they would not (they ſay) have the *Scriptures* polluted, and prophaned, by being made common, and handled with *unwaſhed* and *unholy hands*, therefore they ſuffer none to deal with the *Scriptures* but *men in holy Orders*; and they are afraid leſt by putting the *Scriptures* into vulgar hands, they ſhould but put a knife into the hand of a child or mad-man, wherewith to wound and deſtroy themſelves, wreſting the *Scriptures* to their own deſtruction. But O how fooliſh is the *wiſdom* of man, when it would exalt it ſelf above the *Wiſdom of God!* Did not God know how to provide for the Honour and Majeſty of his *Sacred Word*, and for the good and welfare of poor Souls, if the *Word* were expoſed to the view and uſe of the meaneſt, and loweſt of People? Why then were the *Scriptures* of the *Old Teſtament* written to the Church of the *Jews* in the *Hebrew tongue*, which every man, woman and child ſpake, and underſtood? and why where the *Scriptures* of the *New-Teſtament* written to the Churches of the *Gentiles* in the *Greek tongue*, which was the proper and maternal language of moſt of the Churches we reade of in the New-Teſtament, and generally underſtood by all to whom the Goſpel was at firſt preached? and what mean all thoſe *Commandments* both in the Old & New Teſtament, for reading, meditating and ſearching the Scriptures, and thoſe promiſes of Bleſſing to them that ſo do, made and given promiſcuouſly unto all, if all may not, yea ought not to reade the *Scriptures*? And why did the *Apoſtles*, guided by the *Spirit* of *God*, direct and intitle their *Epiſtles*, not to *Biſhops*, and *Church Officers* only, but even to the whole *Church*, the *Plebs* and all, if the *Plebs* might not reade the *Scriptures*? And why doth *John* write his *Canonical Epiſtle* to the *Elect Lady*

Lady, and to *Gaius* a private Christian, if Ladies and private Christians might not reade Canonical Scripture? And why do *Chrysostom*, *Hierom*, *Austin*, and others of the glorious Lights of the antient Church, so vehemently exhort their People and Auditors to the reading and study of the *Scriptures*? had these men no care of the *Honour* of the Scriptures, or the good of the Soul? *Apage*. Away with these pretences: the true reason why the *Pope* and his Accomplices do so studiously smother the *Scriptures* from their People, is that, rendred by our Saviour *John* 3. 20. *For every one that doth evil hateth the Light, neither cometh to the Light, lest his deeds should be reproved.* And their doom shall be with those, *Luke* 11. 52. *Wo unto you Lawyers, for you have taken away the Key of Knowledge; you entered not in your selves, and them that were entered in you hindered.*

In the second place; This reproves the Impiety of the *Papists*, who under pretence of honouring the Scriptures, shut them from the commom people: So this (on the other side) reproves *the blasphemy of those that think themselvs too good to stand in need of the Scriptures, the Word of God.* The *Papists* think the Scriptures too good for the vulgar people to have any thing to do withal; *these* think themselves, though God knows they are poor ignorant people, yet they think themselves too good to have any thing to do with the Scriptures, or to stand in need of any instruction or direction from the *Scriptures*, the *Word of God*; they think they have the *VVord of God within*, the *Light within*, and that is sufficient for them. Indeed they will grant you, that the Prophecy of *Isaiah* and *Jeremiah*, it was the *Word of God* to *Isaiah* and *Jeremiah*, and the People that lived in their times; and so the Epistles of *Paul* and *Peter*, they were *the VVord of God* to *Peter* and

and *Paul*, and to those to whom they wrote them; but as for themselves, they have (they make account) the same *infallible Spirit* that *Peter* and *Paul* had, and the *dictates* and *motions* of that Spirit are the *same infallible Word of God* to them, that it was to the *Prophets* and *Apostles*, binding them, and others to whom they are sent, to speak it as infallibly as the Revelation of God to the Prophets and Apostles, and their speaking them to others did bind them. *O Pride! O Blasphemy!*

Supposing it to be true which they say, that they have the *same infallible Spirit* which the *Apostles* and *Prophets* had; Yet, first, it will not follow that they have it in the *same Operations* and *Manifestations* that the Prophets and Apostles had; it is a certain Truth, that all the Elect of God that are sanctified have but one and the same Spirit, quickning all, guiding all: As it is written, *There is one Body, and one Spirit*, Eph. 4. 4. But, saith the Apostle, *there are diversity of Gifts, but the same Spirit; and diversity of Administrations, and diversity of Operations*, 1 Cor. 12. 4, 5, 6. *And all these worketh one and the same Spirit*, *ver.* 11. Thus it was in the Apostles dayes, all that had the *same Spirit* that *Peter* and *Paul* had to renew them, and sanctifie them, and work all Grace in them needful to Salvation, had not the *same infallible Guidance* of the Spirit to enable them to deliver things that should be infallible, and αὐτόπται. *Are all Apostles? are all Prophets?* 1 Cor. 12. 29. much less then can it be said now. And it is *highest presumption* for any one that thinks he hath received, and hath indeed received the *Spirit* unto *sanctification*, to think that therefore he hath the *Spirit* in its *infallible guidance* and *direction*.

Secondly. Suppose that these People had the *Spirit* of

of *infallible guidance* and *direction*, and were indeed *inſpired Prophets*, yet that doth not give them a *ſuperſedeas* from attending to the *Scripture*, the *Word of God*. *Daniel* was a *Prophet*, immediately, infallibly inſpired, yet he *ſtudied the Scriptures*. Dan. 9. 2. *I Daniel underſtood by Books the number of the years, whereof the Word of the Lord came to* Jeremiah *the Prophet*. So did *David*, though an *inſpired Prophet*, Pſal. 119. So did *all* the *Prophets*, 1 Pet. 1. 10, 11. *Of which the Prophets have enquired, and ſearched diligently, who prophecied of the Grace that ſhould come unto you, ſearching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Chriſt which was in them did ſignifie; when it teſtified beforehand the ſufferings of Chriſt, and the Glory that ſhould follow.* So that, were they what they would pretend to be, which they are not, *Prophets*, yet they are not too good to attend ſtill upon the Scriptures, the Word of God. Methinks I hear the God of Heaven ſpeaking to theſe *poor* but *proud* ones, as ſometimes he did by way of *holy ſarcaſm* to the *Prince of Tyre*, Ezek. 28. 2. and ſo on, *Becauſe thine heart is lifted up, and thou haſt ſaid, I am a God*; (He that ſaith, he is *godded with God*, and *perfect as God is*, doth he not ſay, *I am a God?*) *Behold, thou art wiſer than Daniel*, ver. 3. (*Daniel* was ſuch a *ſimple man*, as though he was a *Prophet*, and had *glorious Viſions* and *Inſpirations*, yet he, like a ſimple man, would *hang* upon the *Scriptures*, the *written Word* of *God*: but thou art *wiſer* than *Daniel*, thou regardeſt not the *Scriptures*, thou haſt as ſure and infallible a *Light within thee* as that Word is) *Thou ſealeſt up the ſum, full of wiſdom, and perfect in beauty*, ver. 12. *Thou haſt been in* Eden *the Garden of God*; *every precious ſtone was thy covering*, ver. 13. *Thou art the anointed Cherub; thou haſt walked up and down in the midſt of the ſtones of fire*, ver. 14. *Thou waſt perfect in thy wayes, from the*

day

day that thou wert created, ver. 15. All this is ſpoken, κατὰ δόξαν, according to the opinion that the *Prince of Tyre* had of himſelf, God doth but ſpeak his own words and thoughts. And truly ſuch are the thoughts of this *proud generation*, they think they are ſo *perfect*, and ſo *full of wiſdom*, they have no need of the *Scriptures*, the *VVord of God*.

In the third place; Let this that you have heard, *That even the beſt have need of the VVord*; O let it teach every one of you to labour *to maintain in your heart an humble ſenſe of your continual need of the Word*, an *holy hunger* after the *Word*, a *ready cloſing with every Opportunity of attending upon the Word*, a *lothneſs above all things to part with the VVord*, to be left without the *VVord*; better part with the Light of your eyes, with the Bread that is the ſtaff of your lives, yea, with the Life of your bodies, than part with the *VVord*, *which is able to build you up, and give you an inheritance among them that are ſanctified*.

And ſo I come to the third Doctrine, which is this; *That the VVord of God is able to build up the Saints*. Therefore ſaith *Paul* here, *I commend you to God, and the VVord of his Grace, which is able to build you up*.]

Yea (might they think) it is true, if we had ſuch a one as *Paul* for to preach the *VVord* of *God* ſtill unto us, then indeed we ſhould hope to be *edified* and built up.

Nay, ſaith the Apoſtle, though I ſhall preach no more to you, and though you ſhall ſee my face no more, whatever becomes of me, yet the *VVord of God* is able to build you up. The *Word of God is able to build up the Saints*: it is able to *convert* them, which is the *greater*, therefore it is able to *build them up*, which is the *leſſer*; it is *able to ſave their ſouls*, Jam. 1. 21. which is the *end*, therefore it is *able to build them up*, which is but in *tendency* to that *end*.

Hence

Hence it is that the Word of God is compared to *tools* or *instruments* wherewith men *build*, to an *Ax*, *Mat.* 3. to an *Hammer*, and to *Fire*, *Jer.* 23. And here, It is *able to build up*, but how? not of it self, no more than an Ax, or an Hammer can build a House of it self; but God working with the Word, and by the Word, as an Instrument: The Word is able to build up the Saints: *The weapons of our warfare* (saith the Apostle, speaking of the *Ministry* of the *VVord*) *are mighty through God*, 2 Cor. 10. 4. Therefore the *Apostle* here joyns *God* and the *VVord* together; *I commend you to God, and the VVord of his Grace, which is able. God* by the *VVord of his Grace* is able to build you up, not the *VVord alone* without God.

Now this *building up* imports two things.

1. *Preservation from decay.*
2. *Progress and carrying on unto Perfection.*

Now the Word is able to do both these.

First, *It is able to preserve* and keep the Saints from *decaying* in their Graces, from decaying in *Faith* and *Holiness*.

Secondly, It is able to *carry them from Grace*, and *build them up to more perfection.*

Let this then be a *comfort to all the upright-hearted People, who it may be are now full of fear that they shall decay and wither away, and come to nothing*, especially when there is such a great and visible decay of *Preachers* and *Preaching* in the Land, who (alas) when they had the *VVord* constantly and instantly preached and pressed upon them, in season and out of season, had yet much ado to hold on their course then; and now so many of their *faithful, able Teachers* are removed from them, are ready to think, What shall they do now? what will become of them? they shall never be able to hold out. Well Christians, fear not, as long

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as *God* lives, and as his *VVord* lives, and you are commended to them, and reſigned up to them, you are ſafe enough, well enough, *God* is able, and the *VVord of God* is able to keep you from falling away. *Jude* 24. *He is able to build you up*, and he will do it; aſſure your ſelves God will never ſuffer it to be ſaid concerning him, as of that man in the Parable, *This man begun to build, but was not able to finiſh*, Luke 14. 30.

—*VVhich is able to build you up, and give you an inheritance among all them that are ſanctified.*

Qu. This *Inheritance* here ſpoken of, what is it?

Anſ. That which the Apoſtle ſpeaks of, *Col.* 1.12. and calls *an Inheritance among the Saints in Light*; And which the Apoſtle *Peter* ſpeaks of, 1 *Pet.* 1. 4. and calls *an Inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reſerved for us in the Heavens.* So that this *ſtate of Happineſs, and Glory in the Life to come*, is it which the Apoſtle means by this Inheritance, *An Inheritance among all them that are ſanctified.*

Several Doctrines are obſervable from hence.

Firſt, *That Heaven and the Happineſs of it, is an Inheritance.*

Secondly, *That this Inheritance of Heaven, it is a Gift.*

Thirdly, *That God gives this Inheritance by his VVord, —which is able to build you up, and give you an Inheritance.*

Fourthly, *That Heaven is only for ſanctified Perſons*; It is *an Inheritacne among them that are ſanctified.*

Fiftly, *That Heaven is for all ſanctified Perſons. It is an Inheritance among ALL THEM that are ſanctified.*

Firſt, *Heaven is an Inheritance.* So *Epheſ.* 1.11. *In whom alſo we have obtained an Inheritance*: and v. 14.

VVhich

Which is the earnest of our Inheritance. Col. 1. 12. Heb. 9 25. and in many other places.

Hence it is that the *Saints* in Scripture are so often called *Heirs*, *Heirs according to Promise*, Gal. 3. 29. and *Heirs of Grace*, 1 Pet. 3. 7. *Heirs of Salvation*, Heb. 1. 14. *Heirs of the Kingdom*, James 2. 5. *Heirs of God, yea Co-heirs with Christ*, Rom. 8. 17. where I pray mark, that Believers are said to be *joynt-heirs with Christ*, not *joynt-purchasers* with Christ, no, Christ is *Sole-Purchaser* of Life and Glory: but he is pleased of his Free Grace to admit the Saints into *partnership* with him of that Inheritance which he hath purchased: They are therefore said to be *Heirs of God* and *joynt-heirs with Jesus Christ*.

They are said to be *Heirs of God* in respect of the *Person whose Heirs they are*; as a man is said to be such a mans Heir.

They are said to be *joynt-heirs with Christ* in respect of the Person in whose right the *Inheritance* falls to them.

They are said to be *Heirs of Life and Salvation*, in respect of the *Matter* and *Substance* of the *Inheritance*. They are said to be *Heirs of Grace* and *Promise*, in respect of the *way and means* whereby they come for to have claim to this *Inheritance*.

Hæreditas, saith the Civil Lawyer, *est Successio in universum jus defuncti*. When a man dyes, and leaves his whole Estate, House, Lands, Money, Goods, and all he had to another, he that there succeedeth in his whole Estate, is *Hæres ex asse*, his *sole Heir*. Now, truly, Believers cannot in this sense be said to be the Heirs of God, nor can the happiness, and glory of the Life to come, upon this account be said to be an *Inheritance*; for God is *Immortal*, and therefore this *Inheritance* is not *Successio in jus defuncti*. And yet nevertheless

theleſs the happineſs of the Saints in the Life to come is called an *Inheritance*, and the Saints are ſaid to be *Heirs of God*.

Firſt, Becauſe as an *Heir* entering upon the whole Eſtate of all that, that was that mans, whoſe Heir he is, *he enjoyeth it all*: So the Saints being the *Heirs of God*, poſſeſs and *enjoy all the good things that are in God*; they have *Right* to them here in this life, but they *poſſeſs* and *enjoy* them in the Life to come.

Secondly, Becauſe as ordinarily men make their children their *Heirs*, natural children if they have any, or if they have none, they *adopt* ſome into their family, and make them firſt their *children*, then their *Heirs*; ſo it is here, all that are the *Heirs of God*, they are the *Children of God*, not by *Nature*, but by the *Grace of Adoption*. Rom. 8. 17. *If Children, then Heirs; Heirs of God, and Joynt-heirs with Jeſus Chriſt*: *Jeſus Chriſt* is the *Only Son of God by Nature* and He is the *Heir of all things*, Heb. 1. 2. Believers being by Faith united and joyned to Chriſt, they become thereby the *Adopted Children of God*, and *Joynt-heirs with Chriſt*; and this Grace of *Adoption* and *Co-heirſhip*, Jeſus Chriſt himſelf hath purchaſed for them with his own Blood.

Thirdly, Becauſe as an *Inheritance* it is *Largiſſima Compenſatio*, a large and abundant recompence of all that *Love* and *Obedience* which the Son yeelds to the Father: So the *Hapineſs* and *Glory* of the Life to come is not only a *ſufficient*, but a *ſuperabundant Recompence* of all that the Saints of God either do or ſuffer for him.

Fourthly, Becauſe often in Scripture, the phraſe, or denomination of an *Inheritance*, is uſed *pro quavis re-grata & acceptâ*; So *Pſal.* 16. *The lines are fallen to me in pleaſant places, and I have a goodly Heritage*: Now the *Hapineſs* and *Glory* of the Life to come may be called

led an *Inheritance* becauſe it is the moſt *acceptable, deſirable, delightful thing that God himſelf could beſtow upon the Creature.*

Fiftly, An *Inheritance* it is a *free gift.* No Son can *claim* the *Inheritance* at his Fathers hands by way of *merit*; indeed a man may by his *demerit* forfeit his *Inheritance*, and deſerve to be *diſinherited*, but no child can challenge the Inheritance of men, but muſt receive it of free gift: And the Child yet ows all love, and all ſervice, and all duty to his Father though he have never a peny of Inheritance to leave him; and though he hath, and ſhould not leave it to him, but leave it to ſome other, yet ſtill the child ows all Love and Duty to his Father; and the Inheritance that is left him, it is his Fathers love and good-will, and not his deſert: So the *Happineſs* and *Glory* of the Life to come (though as I ſaid before in the third Particular, it is a ſufficient ſuper-abundant reward of all the Love, Duty, Service, and Sufferings of Believers) yet it is not the *wages of their Service*, but it is the *Grace of God*, the *free Gift* of the *good Will* and *Pleaſure* of *God.* And that leads me to the ſecond Doctrine.

That *the Heavenly Inheritance it is a Gift.*

So Scripture expreſly ſpeaks, *Luke* 12. 32. *It is your Fathers good Pleaſure to give you the Kingdom.* Rom. 6. 23. *The wages of ſin is death; but the gift of God is Eternal Life, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.* Death indeed is due wages, deſerved wages, but eternal Life, the Heavenly Inheritance is a *Gift*, *a free gift*, a meer gift, ſo in many other places; and needs it muſt be ſo. I will but uſe the Apoſtle's disjunction, *Rom.* 4. 4. *Either it muſt be of Grace, or of Debt*, of *debt* it cannot be, And therefore it muſt needs be of Grace.

That the Heavenly *Inheritance*, or *Reward*, cannot be of *Debt*, I prove,

First, *That what ever it be that makes another indebted unto me, it muſt be* in debitum *unto him*: For by doing that which is a due debt in me, and which I am obliged to do, I can never make him for whom I do it indebted unto me: Now all our Service and Obedience to God it is but due debt in us unto God, it is that we are obliged to, and therefore all our Service can never oblige God or make him indebted unto us. Upon this account it is our Saviour teacheth us, *Luke* 17. 10. *When ye have done all theſe things which are commanded you, ſay, We are unprofitable Servants, we have done that which was our duty to do.*

Secondly, This cannot be of *debt*, becauſe *there muſt be a proportion between the Work, and the Reward to make the Reward due of debt.* A man that works in your Fields for you a day, why he may come at night and claim twelve or fourteen pence for a dayes work as a due debt, but if he ſhould challenge an hundred or a thouſand pound for one dayes work, you would look upon him as unreaſonable and impudent: There is infinitely more difference between all our Service, and the heavenly *Inheritance*, than there is between a pound for a dayes hedging or ditching in your Fields: It cannot be, that Heaven ſhould be a debt, it muſt then be a Gift, not of Debt but of Grace.

Seeing then, that *Heaven* is an *Inheritance*, and therefore of *Gift*, not of *Merit*, becauſe an Inheritance. *Let this teach us to abhor that proud Popiſh doctrine of Merit, and admire, and adore the free Grace of God in Jeſus Chriſt.* The Reward of *Heaven* and *Glory* it is not a *Purchaſe*, but an *Inheritance*. Among men there is a great deal of difference between a Purchaſe, and an Inheritance. For a Purchaſe a man layeth down a valuable price, but an Inheritance comes to him freely, it coſts him nothing; poſſibly it might coſt another man

man much that purchaſed it for him, but if it deſcend unto him by Inheritance, it coſts him nothing. O my Brethren! Heaven, the Happineſs and Glory of the Life to come, it is not our *Purchaſe*, but our *Inheritance*, we pay nothing for it; indeed it coſt *Chriſt*, our elder Brother, dear to purchaſe it, not for himſelf, for He was Heir by birth; but to purchaſe this *Inheritance* for us it coſt him dear, but it coſt us nothing, Chriſt bequeathed it unto us of free Gift: it is to us not of purchaſe, but *Inheritance*; therefore it is not of *Merit*, but of *Grace*,

Yea, *Heaven* is not only ſaid to be *our Inheritance*, but we are ſaid to be *made Heirs*: So *Tit.* 3. 7. We are not *born* Heirs of *Heaven*, but born Heirs of *Hell*, but we are *made* Heirs of Heaven by the Grace of *Adoption*; yea we are not only made Heirs of Heaven by the Grace of Adoption, but we are made *fit* for Heaven by the Grace of *Sanctification*, unto Acceptation. So that here all is of Grace: The *Inheritance* of *Grace*, our *Right* and *Tittle* to it is of *Grace*; our *Fitting* and *Preparing* for it, is of *Grace*; all of *Grace*, nothing of *Merit*; all of *God*, nothing of our *ſelves*.

Secondly, this, That *Heaven is an Inheritance* which God freely gives. This ſhould teach all of us,

1. *To ſet our minds upon this Inheritance.* A man that hath but poſſibilities, or expectations of an Inheritance to befal him by the death of ſuch or ſuch a one, though it be but a poor, ſlender, paltry matter, yet how hardly can he keep his mind from running upon it, from thinking long till he come to the poſſeſſion of it, from even almoſt wiſhing ſometimes the party dead whoſe the preſent poſſeſſion is.

Filius ante diem Patrios inquirit in annos.

Many a graceleſs Child is even weary of his Father, and ſick of his Mother, only becauſe his mind runs ſo

much upon the Patrimony, the Inheritance, and he thinks ſo long for it. *Pupillumiee utinam quem proximus Hæres Impello ex pungam* —— ſaith another. O my Brethren! did we look upon the ſtate and happineſs of the life to come as an *Inheritance*, as *our Inheritance*, it would be ſo with us, we could not keep our minds from running out upon the happineſs and glory of the life to come, our thoughts would be running upon it, our hearts would be longing and wiſhing for the poſſeſſion of it; and here we may give our thoughts and deſires *line* & *ſcope* to the utmoſt. Indeed in our thoughts of, and deſires after *earthly inheritances*, we had need ſet bounds to our thoughts, and watch our ſelves, leſt we ſhould ſin and tranſgreſs the Commandments; but in reference to this *Heavenly Inheritance* we may let our thoughts and deſires run to the utmoſt bounds and extent of their capacities. Many ſin in thinking of *Heaven* too little, or deſiring *Heaven* too little; few, if any, ſin in minding and deſiring *Heaven* too much: that therefore is the firſt duty this ſhould teach us, To ſet our minds upon *Heaven*, as upon a rich *Inheritance*.

2. *This ſhould teach us to labour to get Evidences, that Heaven is our Inheritance, and when we have got them, to keep them.* You know among men, if a man lay claim to an *Inheritance*, and hath nothing to ſhew for it, he doth but befool himſelf in it; or, if a man hath a right and title to an *Inheritance*, yet if he hath not good and ſufficient Evidence to ſhew for it, he will have but little quiet and peace in the enjoyment of it. Any wrangling litigious fellow may ſhake his freehold, and create to him a great deal of trouble and moleſtation, if not put him quite out of poſſeſſion: So here. A man doth but befool himſelf in laying claim to *Heaven*, if he hath no *Evidence* to produce for that claim of

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his. And this is the commoneſt, and greateſt folly in the World. Men can deride the folly of thoſe that do thus, in reference to earthly and temporal *Inheritances*, and yet themſelves do the ſame things in reference to this *glorious Inheritance*, reſerved in the higheſt *Heavens*, claim it, and have nothing at all to ſhew for it. O take heed of this, get Evidence to ſhew for this *Heavenly Inheritance*, elſe never lay claim to it. If a man hath a true right and title to Heaven, yet if he hath no Evidence to ſhew for that Title of his, he will have little quiet and peace in his Claim. Every Chriſtian hath to do with a moſt ſubtil, and quarelſome adverſary, the *Devil*, who will be continually ſhaking thy Free-hold, and though he cannot diſpoſſeſs thee, nor rend away thine *Inheritance*, yet he will continually vex and moleſt thee; and no way to ſtop his mouth, but by getting *good Evidence* that this *Inheritance* is thine. Now there are three grand *Scripture-Evidences* of our Right to this *Inheritance*, which we find in the Rolls and Record of Sacred Writ.

The firſt is, *The In-being of Chriſt in the ſoul.* Col. 1. 27. *Chriſt in you the hope of Glory.*

The ſecond is, *Our Adoption*, or being the Children of God. *Rom.* 8. 17. *If Children, then Heirs.*

The third is, *Our Sanctification.* Here in the Text, *An Inheritance among them that are ſanctified.*

Now it is true, *theſe three are inſeparable*; he that hath any one of them, hath all of them. Though poſſibly one may be more evident than another ſhall, yet where one is, they all are. Labour therefore to get evidence of theſe: either the Evidence of the *Inbeing* of *Chriſt* in you, or the Evidence of your *Adoption*, or the evidence of your *Sanctification*. Never leave taking pains with your hearts till you have got theſe Evidences.

And when you have once obtained them, *prize them, keep them*, as you would keep the Apple of your eye, as you would keep your Life, your Soul. You know how careful men are to keep their Deeds and Evidences; In time of War and Plunder, they will let twenty things be seized, plundered, and carried away, rather than their *Evidences*: In times of Calamity and Fire, let all they have be lost and burnt rather than their *Writings* and *Evidences*. So, my Brethren, should it be with us, in reference to our *Evidences for Heaven*, we should keep them with exactest care and diligence; whatever *Satan* plunder us of, never let us suffer him to plunder our *Evidences for Heaven*, never suffer him to steal or rend away the Evidences of Christ's inbeing in us, of our being the Sons and Daughters of *God*, of our Sanctification; labour to hold and maintain these to the utmost.

Thirdly, *This should teach us to improve our right to this Inheritance*, to make that Use of it, and get that Benefit by it that we ought. As namely,

First, *To conclude from thence that being an Heir, an Heir of Heaven, thou canst not but be well provided for in the mean time, till thou comest to the actual and full possession of thine Inheritance.* We see how great Heirs are well and honourably maintained, even in their *minority*, their Fathers being rich and kind, will not suffer them to want any thing that is needful and fit for them. If thou canst upon good Evidence conclude thy self an *Heir of God*, thou mayest from thence conclude thou shalt want nothing that is for thy good. And therefore,

Secondly, *In the want of any thing, thou mayest, thou oughtest with boldness to go to God, and make thy wants and requests known to him, with full assurance that thou shalt speed in thy request which he seeth fit for thee.* God will

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be so far from denying thee, that it will be the joy and rejoycing of his heart to see that thou canst discern what is needful and convenient for thee, and it will be a prevailing motive with God; O this is my *Heir*, I may not deny him that which is good for him, now that he asketh it of me.

Thirdly, *In the evidence and assurance of this Inheritance, comfort thy self in all other losses and wants whatsoever*: whatever thou loseſt thou canst not lose thine *Inheritance*, thou maiest lose thy Liberty, thy Living, thy Friends, thy Ministers, God's Ordinances, thy Life, yea the sweet and comfortable sence of God's Love, which is better than Life; but comfort thy self in this, thine *Inheritance* thou canst not lose, that is *reserved for thee in the highest Heavens*; thou maiest sooner cease to be a *Man* than to be an *Heir*: this was that caused the Saints of God formerly *to take joyfully the spoyling of their goods*. In Heb. 11. 34. *Knowing that they had in Heaven, a better and a more enduring Substance.*

Fourthly, *Under sharpest dispensations of Divine Providence still comfort thy self with this, thou art a Child, thou art an Heir still*; thy Father may frown upon thee, chide thee, buffet, scourge thee, turn thee out of doors for a few nights, all this is sad, but He will never *disinherit* thee. Other fathers indeed sometimes out of their passion and displeasure, and sometimes upon the misdemeanours of their sons, disinherit them, but God cannot, will not do thus to any of His Children; *For the Lord will not cast off for ever, but though he cause grief, yet will he have compassion according to the multitude of his Mercies*, Lam. 3. 31, 32. and John 8. 35. *The Servant abides not in the House for ever, but the Son abideth for ever*: A mercinary may be turned off for ever, but a Son never shall. *Psal.* 89.

89. 32, 33. *I will visit their transgressions with a Rod, and their iniquities with Stripes; nevertheless my Loving-kindness will I not take from them, nor suffer my Faithfulness to fail.*

Fifthly, From the consideration of this, that thou art an *Heir of Heaven, arm thy self against the fears of Death*; let Death be terrible to those whose portion is solely and wholly in this life, whom Death separates from all the good they have, and hope for: As for thee who art a *Child of God*, an *Heir of Heaven*, why shouldst thou fear Death, that doth but put thee into the *actual possession* of thy *Inheritance*. *Ejus est mortem timere qui ad Christum nolit ire; ejus est ad Christum nolle ire, qui se non credit cum Christo incipere regnare*, saith *Cyprian*, Let him fear Death that is unwilling to go to Christ; let him be unwilling to go to Christ, that doth not believe he is a *Joynt-Heir* with Christ in the Kingdom of Heaven. The same *Cyprian* speaks of a man that when he lay a dying, with some unwillingness and lothness to dye, had a Vision of one like the Son of Man appearing by him, saying to him with some kind of indignation, *Pati timetis, exire non vultis, quid faciam pro vobis?* You are afraid to suffer, you are not willing to depart, what shall I do for you? O think what a shame it is for those who when they do hope for this *Inheritance*, to be so unwilling and loth to die, as that *Jesus Christ* should have occasion thus to speak unto them.

A fourth Duty we should learn from hence, is, *To walk worthy of this Inheritance*. And so,

First, *Far be it from those who profess, and believe themselves to be Heirs of Heaven, to be eager and covetous, and greedy of earth and earthly things*. Εἴ τις ὁ βασιλεὺς, &c. If a King, saith *Chrysostom*, should take a Beggar from the Dunghil, and make him the Heir of his Crown, and he after this should go up and down a begging from door

door to door, and be as solicitous about his raggs and patched clothes, as he was before he was adopted to that *Inheritance*; would not this be a disgrace to himself and to the King that had adopted him? and would not all the World condemn him as a man of a base and dunghil spirit, unworthy of that Honour, and that Inheritance that was cast upon him? For thee that art a Christian, whom God hath taken from the Dunghil, and made an *Heir* of *Heaven*, for thee to be as greedy of the world, as gripple of a half-peny or a peny, as if thou wert one of the Worlds beggars still, this is a base ignoble thing, unworthy of such an *Heir* as thou dost pretend thy self to be. Therefore abhor it, away with it.

Secondly, *If thou be an Heir of Heaven, labour to be content with thy present condition, whatever it be, in expectation and assurance of that Inheritance thou hopest for.* There is many a great *Heir*, when he is in his *minority* lives in a pretty mean condition, and makes nothing of it, bears it all with patience, he knows it will be better with him one day when he comes to Age, there is a fair Estate coming to him, and in the thoughts of that he comforts himself in his present condition. So thou that art an *Heir* of *Heaven*, though at the present thou livest barely, and goest near the wind, yet content and comfort thy self with this, *Thou hast a rich and glorious Inheritance reserved for thee in the highest Heavens*, when once thou comest to the enjoyment of that, thou shalt be full and want nothing. This was it which made the *Patriarchs*, *Abraham*, *Isaac* and *Jacob* content with a poor pilgrim life and condition, a wandring state and condition, because *they looked for a better Country*; and when this took up their hearts, then they could chearfully sit down in their Tents, they could dwell in strange Countries, they could go on in

obedience

obedience to God, what way ſoever he called them, readily: and ſo ſhould we.

Thirdly, *Never fret nor repine at the happineſs and proſperity of the Wicked.* When we ſee them ſwimming and bathing in all that affluence of good things, which *Job* or *David* expreſſeth, *Job* 21. and *Pſalm* 73. They have Corn, and Wine, and Oyl, and Gold and Silver, and Houſe and Lands, and Children to inherit them; Thou, poor thou, haſt none of theſe things: but haſt thou *Heaven*, though but in reverſion? never trouble thy ſelf, thy portion is an hundred thouſand times better than theirs. Was it any grief of heart, think ye, to *Iſaac*, to ſee the ſons of *Keturah* have great gifts beſtowed upon them by *Abraham*; one of them, it may be, ſo many thouſand Yoak of Oxen, another ſo many thouſand Sheep and Camels, a third ſo many Talents of Gold and Silver? as long as *Iſaac* had the *Inheritance* this was no grief of heart to him. Much good may it do them, thinks he, as long as the *Inheritance* is mine. So ſay thou, Much good may it do the World with all their Wealth and Riches, as long as *Heaven* is mine I envy them not. Thus much for the two firſt things. *Heaven is an Inheritance. This Inheritance is a Gift.*

I come now to the third, and that is this; *That God gives the Inheritance of Heaven to his Children by his Word.* Therefore the Gift of this Inheritance is in part aſcribed to the Word. —*Which is able to build you up, and give you an Inheritance.*] A Father gives ſuch or ſuch an Inheritance to his Child by Teſtament, or by Inſtrument in writing: The *Word* of *God* it is *Teſtamentum*, it is *Inſtrumentum*, whereby God conveyeth the *Inheritance* of *Heaven* to his Saints and Children.

Firſt, *God reveals by his Word that there is ſuch an Inheritance reſerved in the Heavens*; which were it not

that

that God had revealed it in his Word, the weak heart of ſinful and fallen man could have no true notions or conceptions of: *For eye hath not ſeen, nor ear heard, neither can it enter into the heart of man to conceive, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.* The poor Heathens did ſtumble upon the Notion of Eternal rewards and puniſhments, but alas, fell as far ſhort of the true Notion of thoſe rewards and puniſhments as Earth is of Heaven; *But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit*, 1 Cor. 2. 10. that is, *by his Spirit in his Word.*

Secondly, As God reveals this Inheritance to us by his Word, ſo, ſecondly, *God makes offer of this Inheritance to us in his Word, and invites and calls us to the participation of it.* 2 Theſſ. 2. 13, 14. *God hath from the beginning choſen you to Salvation, whereunto he called you by our Goſpel, to the obtaining of the Glory of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt.*

Thirdly, As God revealeth this Inheritance, and calls and invites to the participation of it; ſo *God in his Word ſpecifies who, and what manner of perſons they are upon whom he will beſtow it. Bleſſed are the poor in ſpirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven, — which the righteous Judge ſhall give; and not to me only, but to all that love his appearing*, 2 Tim. 4. 8.

Fourthly, *God by his Word begets thoſe that are by his appointment and nomination, the Heirs of this Eternal Salvation, God by his Word begets them again to a lively hope of this Glory.* 1 Pet. 1. 3, 4. *Bleſſed be God who hath begotten us again to a lively hope, to an Inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reſerved for us in the higheſt Heavens.* And that this begetting again is by the *Word of God*, ſee afterwards, ver. 23. *Being born again, not of corruptible ſeed, but incorruptible, by the Word of God.*

Fifthly,

Fifthly, *God by his Word* doth not only beget his People to a lively Hope of this Inheritance, but he *prepares and fits them for the poſſeſſion of it; and makes us meet to be partakers of the Inheritance of the Saints in Light*, Col. 1. 12.

Now this, that God gives the Inheritance of Heaven by the Word, this in the uſe of it, ſtill *beſpeaks our greateſt affections for, our higheſt eſteem of, our conſtant, conſcientious attendance upon the Word of God*, as that which is, *Patris noſtri Teſtamentum, Hæreditatis noſtræ Syngrapha, & Inſtrumentum*, The *Will* of our Heavenly Father, the *Deed of Gift*, and *Inſtrument*, whereby he conveyeth over unto us our *Heavenly Inheritance*. How Sacred and Inviolable do men count their Father's Will and Teſtament? what honour do they put upon it, what truſt and confidence do they repoſe in it? Such, and infinitly more than ſuch, ſhould be our honour for, and our truſt in the *Word of God*. How precious do men count the Writings and Evidences whereby they hold their Inheritances? So, and infinitly more than ſo, precious ought the *Word of God* to be unto us, It being that Inſtrument, whereby Heaven it ſelf is paſſed over to us for our Inheritance.

—— *Which is able to build you up, and give you an Inheritance, among all them that are ſanctified.*

In which words you have the proper and diſtinguiſhing Character of thoſe to whom this *Inheritance* belongs, and they are the Saints, or Sanctified ones, *It is an Inheritance among ALL THEM that are Sanctified.* Where mark, 1. The *Reſtriction* of this *Inheritance*, it is limited only *to them that are Sanctified.* 2dly. The *Extent* of it, it is in common, *to ALL THEM that are ſanctified, An Inheritance among all them that are ſanctified.*

I ſhall

I shall for the better dispatch put both these Particulars into one Doctrine, namely,

That Heaven is the Inheritance of all Saints, and only of Saints. Or,

Heaven is only for them that are Sanctified, and for all them. Or thus,

No unsanctified person shall ever enter into Heaven: Nor no Sanctified Person shall ever misse of Heaven.

The Negative, That *No unsanctified person shall ever enter into Heaven.* This is proved by clear and express Scripture, 1 *Cor.* 6. 9. *Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the Kingdom of God: Be not deceived, neither Fornicators, nor Idolaters, nor Adulterers, nor Theeves, nor Coveteous, nor Drunkards, &c. shall ever inherit the Kingdom of God.* Rev. 21. 27. It is said of the heavenly *Jerusalem, there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth.* Heb. 12. 14. *Without holiness no man shall see the Lord*; therefore no unsanctified person shall ever enter into Heaven.

And for the second Branch which is Affirmative. *That every Sanctified Person shall inherit Heaven: That no Sanctified Person shall miss of Heaven.* This is as clear in Scripture: Therefore it is called *the Inheritance of the Saints*, Col. 1. 12. because all, and every of the Saints, the least as well as the greatest, have an equal share in this *Inheritance.* And indeed, *Sanctification* is but the *earnest*, the *first fruits*, the *infancy* of *Glory*, and can no wayes be separated from it, and it is as impossible that any one that is truly Sanctified should miss of *Heaven*, as it is impossible for any unsanctified person to enter into *Heaven.* For,

First, *Sanctification and Glorification, Holiness and Heaven are joyned together in the Appointment and Decree of God.* Whom God hath predestinated to Heaven, he

he hath predeſtinated to Holineſs; and whom he hath predeſtinated to Holineſs, He hath predeſtinated to Heaven. *Epheſ.* 1. 4, 5. *According as he hath choſen us in him before the foundations of the world, that we ſhould be holy, without blame before him in love: Having predeſtinated us to the Adoption of Children by Jeſus Chriſt unto himſelf, &c.* Mark, whom God hath predeſtinated to be *Children*, and ſo *Heirs* of Heaven, he hath choſen to Holineſs. *Heaven and Holineſs* are joyned together in God's Decree of Predeſtination.

Secondly, *Heaven and Holineſs are joyned together in the Purchaſe.* Look how many Chriſt hath purchaſed Heaven for, ſo many he hath purchaſed Holineſs for. Heb. 13. 12. *Jeſus, that he might ſanctifie the People with his own blood, ſuffered without the gate.* Mark, *Jeſus Chriſt* ſhed his blood, not only that he might *Save* his People, but that he might *Sanctifie* his People; and not one Perſon more will be ſaved by the blood of Jeſus, than are ſanctified by the blood of Jeſus. *Heaven* and *Holineſs* are joyned together in the Purchaſe of the Son, as well as in the Purpoſe of the Father.

Thirdly, *As Heaven and Holineſs are joyned together in the Purpoſe of the Father, and in the Purchaſe of the Son, ſo they are joyned together in the Work of the Spirit.* None are called effectually by the holy Ghoſt to the participation of Heaven and Glory, but ſuch as are firſt called by the ſame Spirit unto Sanctification and Holineſs: nor none are effectually called by the Spirit unto Sanctification and Holineſs, but are called at the ſame inſtant unto Heaven and Glory. 2 *Theſſ.* 2. 13. *We are bound to give thanks always to God for you, Brethren, beloved of the Lord, becauſe God hath from the beginning choſen you to Salvation, through the Sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the Truth, whereunto He hath called*

called you by our Gospel, to the obtaining of the Glory of the Lord Jesus Christ. Mark, whom God calleth by the Gospel to Glory, he calls by the same Gospel to belief of the Truth, and Sanctification of the Spirit: So that you see, Heaven and Holiness are joyned together in the Purpose of the Father, in the Purchase of the Son, in the Operation of the Spirit: And therefore it is not possible that ever any that are not holy should obtain Heaven; and as impossible that ever any that are truly holy should miss of the Heavenly Inheritance.

Now this, that no unsanctified person shall ever enter into Heaven, nor no Sanctified Person shall ever miss of Heaven; this in the use of it may be as terrible to all unsanctified ones, as comfortable to all the Saints.

First, *This may be a sound of Fears in the ears and hearts of all unsanctified ones.* Is it impossible that ever any unsanctified one should enter into Heaven, as you see it is? O then think, O then think of this, and tremble, you that despise *Holiness*, you that mock and jeer at *Holiness* think of this; you, all you, who ever you be that are *unholy*, though you have not yet arrived at that height of *Diabolism*, as to mock and jeer, and hate *Holiness*, yet you do not love it, nor regard it, nor care to be *Holy*, but are content to continue in your sinful and unsanctified estate. In the fear of God, I beseech you, consider with your selves; you know you must not live in this world alwayes; you see many dye before you, old and young; and it is impossible but you should think, though few of you consider it, yet it is impossible but you should think, that you your selves must die, and you do not know how soon: Now think of it in the fear of God, I beseech you, when-ever you die, be it sooner or later; when-ever you die, if you be *unsanctified*, think what will be-

come of you: Whither shall ye go when you go from hence, think you? Do you think to go to *Heaven*, to receive this *Inheritance* in Life and Glory? Alas, poor creature, it is impossible, how ever thou hast flattered thy self, it may be this many a year, with hopes of going to *Heaven* when thou dieſt, it is impossible, unless it be possible for *God* the Father to alter his purpose and decree: And whereas he once decreed that none should be saved but those that were first sanctified; now to make a contrary Decree, for the saving of those that never were, nor would be Saints: It is impossible for thee that art unsanctified to go *Heaven*, unless it be possible for the *Son* of *God* to become incarnate and suffer Death again, to purchase Heaven for those whom he never sanctified, nor never intended to sanctifie by his Blood; it is impossible for thee to go to Heaven, unless it be possible for *God* the *Holy-Ghost* to alter his method, and separate those things in his working, which God hath joyned together in his Word. Therefore flatter not thy self, deceive not thy self with hopes of *Heaven*; but know that *Heaven* is everlastingly shut against thee, whatever thou be, if thou beest not sanctified and holy; though thou hast carried thy self never so justly and squarely, though thou give much Alms to the Poor, though thou be baptized, and profess to believe in Christ, though thou reade the Scriptures, and pray in thy Family, though thou come to the Church, and hear the Word, and receive the Sacrament, yea though thou hast some fits of sorrow for thy sin, yea though thou confessest and leavest thy sin, and beest forward and frequent in Christian Society, and in the Duties of Religion; yet if thou beest not *sanctified throughout*, there is an utter impossibility of thy ever entering into *Heaven*. *Heaven* is a most holy place, and it is impossible for

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any but those that are truly and really *holy*, to find entrance and abode there. And if it were possible for any unsanctified wretch to creep and steal into Heaven, *Heaven* would either *spue him out* again, and deliver it self of such an unsavory burden, or *break in pieces* under him, and let him sink down to Hell, his own place, for ever. There is, they say, such a repugnancy in some kind of Glass, and Earth, as your *Venice*-Glass, and *Porcellane* or *China* Dishes, that if a Spider or a Toad, or any such venemous creature be put into them, they would break in pieces presently. Truly so would *Heaven* if an unsanctified sinner should enter there. There is such a Repugnancy between Heaven the most holy place, and the most unholy heart of every unsanctified sinner, that *Heaven* would even rent and break in pieces if such a creature should appear there; yea, if an unsanctified sinner should get into Heaven, he would be weary of Heaven, as well as Heaven would be weary of him; he would even wish himself out again; the *Place* is no wayes fit for him, the *Persons* that are there no company for him, the *Actions* that are done there no imployment for him; God will never admit any into Heaven, that shall be a *burden* to Heaven, and to whom *H*eaven also shall be a *burden*: *H*eaven would be to the unsanctified sinner but as the *dry land* is to the *Fish*; therefore no unsanctified person shall ever enter into *H*eaven.

Think therefore, O thou that art unsanctified, think whither thou art going? if thou die this night, as for any thing thou knowest thou mayest die this night, think what will become of thee, whither thou shalt go: to *Heaven* thou canst not, it is impossible; whither then? whither must thou then go? O mightst thou die, as doth the Ox and the Ass, whose soul perish whith their body; and as it is educed *è potentiâ materiæ*,

ſo it periſheth with the matter and ſubſtance of the body: if thy ſoul might do ſo too, O how happy ſhouldſt thou be, in compariſon of what thou ſhalt be if thou die in an unſanctified condition! but alas, poor creature, thy ſoul is immortal, thy ſoul muſt have a being for ever; therefore there muſt be ſome place, ſome *ubi*, in which thy ſoul muſt be for ever. And what, is that *This Inheritance among the Saints in Light*? Ah! No, No, there is another place, and another inheritance appointed for thee. Reade thy portion in *Revel.*21. 1. *But the Fearful, and Unbelieving, and Abominable, and Murderers, and Whoremongers, and Sorcerers, and Idolaters, and all Liars ſhall have their part in the Lake that burneth with fire and brimſtone, which is the Second death*; thy portion is *everlaſting fire, prepared for the Devil and his angels.* Thy portion hath been with the Devil and his angels in ſinning here; thou haſt caſt in thy lot with them in ſin here, and thou muſt, whether thou wilt or no, receive thy portion and take thy lot with them in ſuffering hereafter. But,

In the ſecond place; *This is as comfortable to them that are Sanctified, as it is terrible to the Unſanctified.* For, as it is impoſſible that any Unſanctified perſon ſhould enter into *Heaven*; ſo, it is as impoſſible that any Sanctified one, truly ſanctified, ſhould miſs of *Heaven.* Thou that art a Saint, how mean and poor ſoever, how weak ſoever thy Grace be, how imperfect ſoever thy Sanctification be, yet if thou beeſt one that is truly ſanctified, though thou beeſt never ſo little and low in thine own eyes; though, with *Paul*, thou look upon thy ſelf as one that is *leſs than the leaſt of all Saints*, as the leaſt in all thy Father's Family; yet I aſſure thee from the Lord, thou ſhalt ſurely go to *Heaven*; yea, thou ſhalt not only go to *Heaven*, and have ſome *little corner* of Heaven for thine, (though, O what cauſe

cause of joy and triumph would that be to some poor soul, if they might but be sure of the *least corner* in *Heaven*) but I tell thee, *whole Heaven* shall be thine; for thou art an *Heir*, the *Inheritance* belongs to thee, as much as to *Abraham*, or *Isaac*, or *David*, or *Peter*, or *Paul*, or any the most glorious of Saints that ever was upon the Earth, or that is in *Heaven*.

For this know, in the first place, *That though men do not make all their children Heirs, yet God doth.* Men usually settle the Inheritance upon the first-born or eldest, and turn all the rest off with small portions. But God doth not so; all his Children, Sons and Daughters both, they are *all Heirs*; not only *Abraham*, *Isaac* and *Jacob*, and the *Patriarchs*, who were (as I may say) *God's eldest Sons*; not only they are his *Heirs*, nor only the *Lord Jesus Christ*, who is the *first-born* of every creature; not only *He* is an *Heir*, but even *thou*, who ever thou beest, though the poorest, weakest Saint, thou art an *Heir* of *God*, and *Joynt-heir with Christ*.

Secondly, As thou art an Heir, so *the whole Inheritance is thine*. If a man had ten or twenty Sons, and were resolved to make them all his Heirs, he could not give the whole Inheritance to every one of them, but must divide it into so many parts, as he had Sons, and give to every one but his piece of the whole Inheritance. But now thou that art a Saint, thou art an *Heir*, and the [*whole Inheritance is thine*] All the Glory of *God*, all the good things of *God* are thine, intirely thine, as if thou hadst them to thy self alone, and there were none to share in them besides thy self: *Hæc Hæreditas non imminuitur copiâ possessorum, nec fit angustior Heredum Numerositate; sed tanta est multis, quanta paucis, tanta singulis, quanta omnibus*, saith *Augustine*; *this Inheritance is not lessened by the Multitude of those that possess it, nor made narrower for the Numerousness of Heirs;*

but it is as great to many, as if they were few, as large to every single person as it is to all. This is very significantly expressed by the Apostle *Paul*, *Col.* 1. 12. where he calls it an *Inheritance among the Saints in Light*. You know *Light* is a thing of that nature that it cannot be divided: If there be twenty, or an hundred men in a Room, and there be but one light among them, that light is not parted into twenty or an hundred peices, but every man enjoyeth the benefit of the light, as fully and wholly to himself, as if there were none but he in the Room. Or as it is with the light of the *Sun*, or the *Heavens*; all the men in the world that have eyes in their heads to see, they have all a like share in, and a like benefit by the light of the *Sun*, and they do as fully enjoy it, as if every man had it to himself alone. So it is with the *Inheritance* of *Heaven*, all that are in Heaven do possess it every one fully, and entirely, it is wholly the enjoyment of every one in Heaven, even as the light of the *Sun* is the enjoyment of every one upon Earth.

Thirdly, Thou that art a Saint, how mean and weak soever, as thou art an *Heir*, and the Inheritance is wholly thine; so, thirdly, *this Inheritance is certain to thee*, thou canst no wayes miss it. Indeed, Inheritances that are left, or given men, many times prove great uncertainties. Many an *Heir* is cozened or baffled of his fair Estate; and many a young Prodigal quickly squanders away that Inheritance which his Father with a great deal of toil and care had got for him: But this *Inheritance* is subject to no such mischance, the *Devil* himself cannot cozen thee of this *Inheritance*, he cannot wrest it from thee neither by force nor fraud; nor canst thou mortgage, or forfeit, or any other wayes imbezel thine Inheritance. It is an *Inheritance reserved for you in the highest Heavens*: and

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as this Inheritance is reserved for you, so *you are and shall be reserved unto it*; as it follows in the very next words, *Who are kept by the Power of God, through Faith, unto Salvation*, 1 Pet. 1. 5.

Fourthly, As thou art an *Heir*, and as the Inheritance is thine, and wholly thine, and surely thine; so in the fourth place, *This Inheritance is a most rich and glorious Inheritance*. If a man were an *Heir*, and had the whole Inheritance to himself, and were sure that he could not lose it; yet after all this it may be but a poor and slender Inheritance, far from any sufficiency for a livelihood. But now this Inheritance it is a sufficiency, and not only a bare sufficiency, but *amplius*, something more. Therefore the Apostle, speaking of it, calls it, τὸ πλοῦτος τῆς δόξης τῆς κληρονομίας αὐτοῦ. *The Riches of the Glory of this Inheritance*. Mark, the Apostle speaking of this Inheritance, speaks not onely of the Riches of this Inheritance, nor only of the Glory of this Inheritance, but of the *Riches and Glory*, yea, of the *Riches of the Glory* of this Inheritance; to shew, that it is indeed an Inheritance most rich and glorious. This Inheritance is so rich, so glorious, that *Eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive of it*. Now thou that art a Saint, this Inheritance, this *rich and glorious Inheritance*, it is thine, wholly thine, surely thine. O then what cause hast thou to be comforted and rejoyce in this thy portion, to sing *David's* Song of Praise, *Psal.* 16. 6. *The lines are fallen to me in pleasant places, I have a goodly Heritage*.

In the third place. Is it so, that not one that is unsanctified shall ever enter into *Heaven*, nor no one that is sanctified shall ever miss of *Heaven*; *Then all you that desire Heaven, that hope for Heaven, labour to*

be holy; for, without Holineſs, you hope for *Heaven in vain*: For though *Holineſs* be not *Cauſa Cœli*, yet it is *Via ad Cœlum*; though it be not the *moving* or *meriting cauſe* for which God gives *Heaven* and *Happineſs* to us, yet it is *cauſa ſine qua non*, as is clear in that Text, *Without Holineſs none can ſee the Lord.* And the truth is, *Holineſs* is that life and ſtate begun upon Earth, which is perfected and perpetuated in *Heaven* to all Eternity: And that man never is nor ſhall be a *glorious Saint* in *Heaven* that is not firſt a *gracious Saint* upon *Earth*. A man muſt be an Infant before he be a Man: *Grace* is the *Infancy* of *Glory*. O therefore, every one of you, *deſire Holineſs, ſeek Holineſs, pray for Holineſs, ſtrive, labour* after *Holineſs*, as you would deſire, ſeek, pray for, ſtrive, labour after *Heaven* it ſelf. *Holineſs* being that intrinſecal qualification, which though it do not make you ἄξιον, yet it makes you ἱκανὸν; though it do not make you *worthy* of Heaven, yet it makes you *meet, and fit to be partakers of that Inheritance which is amongſt the Saints in Light.*

Now the God of Peace ſanctifie you throughout; and *I pray God your whole ſpirit, ſoul and body be preſerved blameleſs unto the coming of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt.*

I Am now by the Providence of God upon the point of leaving, not only you, but the Land, and I know not whether ever I ſhall ſee the face of this *Aſſemblie* any more; and I would fain before we part [*commend you to God*,] and leave you in the [*Arms of His everlaſting Mercy*, and the *Boſome of his infinite Love*] And

O that I could do this with comfort, and with confidence concerning *every one of you!* Concerning *some of you*, I profess I can, and that upon the same account, that the *Apostles* commended the Churches unto God, in *Acts* 14. 23. *They commended them to the Lord on whom they believed.* Well might the *Apostles*, and with holy boldness, commend these Christians to the Lord, whom they knew to be *Believers*, whom they knew not only to have given up their *names* to Christ in an open and visible profession, but to have believed in him by a true and lively *Faith*, and to have received him for their *LORD* and *KING*, as well as for their *Priest* and *Prophet*. A Minister may deliver up such a People to God with as much confidence and assurance, as a man can deliver up his child into the arms of his own dearest, and most indulgent father. And such are some of you, and through Grace many of you, *Believers* not in *name* only, and *profession*, but *indeed* and in *truth*, and in *power*: Such I can heartily, confidently, and comfortably *commend unto God*, and leave with him, in full assurance that *He will never leave you, nor forsake you*; in full assurance that however things go in *Dedham*, however things go in *England*, however things go with your selves as to the concernments of this life, *it shall be well with you to Eternity.*

O that I could think thus, and speak thus, and hope thus of you all! *But are there not with you, even with you also, sinners against the Lord! are there not some among you, whom if a Minister should deal with according to Gospel Rule, he should rather deliver to Satan, than commend to God?* Are there not some among you whose *Crime* and *Character*, if not *Name*, may be found in that *black Bill* of men excommunicate in Heaven, and from

from Heaven? which the *Apostle* presents you, 1 *Cor.* 6. 9. where he reckons up *ten* several sorts of sinners that are excluded from the Kingdom of God. *Neither Fornicators, nor Idolaters, nor Adulterers, nor Effeminate, nor Abusers of themselves with mankind, nor Thieves, nor Coveteous, nor Drunkards, nor Revilers, nor Extortioners, shall inherit the Kingdom of God:* And are there not some such as these amongst you? Are there not *some that walk, of whom I have told you often, and now even tell you weeping, that they are enemies to the Cross of Christ? whose end is destruction, whose belly is their god, whose glory is their shame, who mind earthly things*, Phil. 3. 18. Do you think a poor Minister, after above twenty years spent amongst such a People, in fruitless and unsuccesful labours, can with confidence *commend such unto God? O Sirs*, what shall I say to you? what shall I do for you?

Parents when they lye a dying, and are about to commend, as their own souls, so their children to God, put a difference between good and bad, between *gracious* and *graceless* children. Look over *Gen.* 49. and you shall find that good old *Jacob* doth not commend *Reuben*, *Simeon* and *Levi* to God in such a manner, as he commends *Judah*, *Joseph* and *Benjamin*, and some other of his children. And I have heard of a Godly *Parent*, that having several children, whereof one was notoriously wicked and prophane; when the *Parent* lay a dying, all the Children were called together to attend at his death, and there the *Parent* gave several Prayers and Blessings to the several Children, commending them to God, *But as for you*, (saith the Parent, to one that was wicked and graceless) *Child, as for you, I can look for no other but to glorifie God in your just condemnation to Hell, at the Day of Judgment.* A

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ſad ſpeech for a dying *Parent* to leave as his laſt words to a poor Child, which yet *God* in infinite mercy turned to good.

Should I ſpeak thus concerning any of you, it would be more *grievous* to my *ſelf*, than to ſome of you, it may be. But the Lord knows this will be the portion of many of *God's Miniſters* in that *Great Day*; the *Lord* grant it be not *mine*. But many of *God's Miniſters* will be called out as *bitter witneſſes* in that Day againſt their Peoples ſouls; and God will ſay unto them, Did not ſuch, and ſuch, live under your Miniſtry? did you not *warn* them of their ſins? of their *drunkenneſs*, *fornication*, *uncleanneſs*, *lying*, *ſwearing*, *worldlineſs*, *ſecurity*, *neglect of holy Duties*? Did you not *remonſtrate* to them the evil of their wayes? did you not *call* them, *invite*, *exhort*, *perſwade* them to repentance? did you not foretel them of this Day, and of the Wrath and Vengeance prepared for ſinners? did you not acquaint them with my *Name*? did you not promiſe them *Pardon* and *Forgiveneſs*, *Heaven* and *Happineſs* upon condition of their *Repentance*, *Faith*, *and new Obedience*? O my Brethren, when God in the preſence of his holy Angels and Saints ſhall put theſe *interrogatories* to us his poor *Miniſters*, *that have ſpoken to you in his Name*; What ſhall we ſay, what can we ſay? Muſt we, can we, dare we, think you, to *excuſe*, or *extenuate* your wickedneſſes, lye againſt the Truth, and to our own ſouls, and ſay, *we have not warned you*, we have not *admoniſhed you*, *exhorted*, *perſwaded you*, when our *conſciences* know we have, and *your conſciences* know it too? We muſt ſay, *Lord, thou knoweſt all things, and thou knoweſt we have in ſome meaſure of truth, through Grace, though with much human infirmity, ſought and deſired, and endeavoured the ſalvation of theſe mens ſouls, as of*

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our own: We have many and many a time *warned* them, and that with tears; but they would not be warned: We have *perſwaded* them with all the arguments our reaſon, helped by thy Grace, could invent, but they would not be perſwaded; we have *entreated* them with all the moſt urgent and affectionate importunity we could uſe, but they would not be entreated.

Then will the Lord ſay unto us, his poor Miniſters, *I pronounce you pure, and innocent from the blood of theſe men. O bleſſed, O joyful Word for us!* But as for you, He will ſay unto you, *Your deſtruction be upon your own heads, Go ye curſed into everlaſting fire, prepared for the Devil and his angels. O doleful* word for you to *hear!* and *doleful* for us now to think of, while we are in this fleſh. But let me tell you, *all creature relations and affections ſhall in the Saints be ſo ſwallowed up in the Glory of God, and in the joy of their own Salvation, that Saints and Angels ſhall rejoyce in the condemnation of all wicked and ungodly men; and with loud acclamations ſhall ſing Hallelujahs, Salvation, and Glory, and Honour, and Power unto the Lord our God; for True and Righteous are his Judgments.*

But *Ah Brethren, my hearts deſire, and prayer, is for you all, that you may all be ſaved.* Shall I therefore *be bold with you*, yea Brethren, *let me be bold with you in the Lord.* I have heard of a very *holy* and *eminently learned* and *pious* man, that lying upon his death-bed, and having his Children about him, among other things, he uſed this remarkable expreſſion; *I charge you*, ſaith he, *that none of you dare to appear before me in the Day of Judgment, in an unconverted condition.* Intimating that if they did, he ſhould be one of the firſt that ſhould ſtand up as a witneſs againſt them.

Mr. *Bolton.*

Give

Give me leave to uſe a like expreſſion unto you. *I a poor unworthy Miniſter of Jeſus Chriſt, yet his Miniſter unto you, I hope for good, that have often heretofore admoniſhed, and charged you in his Name, being now by His Providence to leave you, never more to ſee your faces, nor to ſpeak to you in His Name any more; I charge you all from the higheſt to the loweſt, from the leaſt to the greateſt: I charge you before God, and the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who ſhall judge the quick and the dead at His Appearing, and before all the holy Angels, who are preſent, and Witneſſes to theſe words, I charge you, That none of you appear in the Day of Judgment, in an unconverted condition; leſt even theſe words of mine, be brought in on that Day as a Witneſs againſt you.*

And now, Brethren, I commend you to God; having thus *admoniſhed* you, thus *warned* you, thus *charged* you; you that are yet in your ſins, *I now commend you to God.* O that God would make this *laſt Warning*, this *laſt Admonition*, this *laſt Charge*, theſe *laſt Words* more effectual, than a thouſand others have been: That as *Sampſon* ſlew more *Philiſtines* at his *death*, than in all his *life*, ſo I might be the happy Inſtrument, *to ſave more Souls now at my departure from you, than in all my life before.* I can do no more but *commend you to God*, that God *who gives being to things that are not*, who is able *to raiſe the dead*, who is able *even of ſtones to raiſe up children unto Abraham.* That *great*, and *mighty*, and *almighty God* ſhew his Saving Power *to you*, and *in you.* Thoſe that are *dead* in their ſins and treſpaſſes, *God Almighty quicken you*; you that are yet *hardened* in your ſins, *God Almighty humble you, ſoften you, change you, make you of ſtones the ſons and daughters of Abraham.* And as for you, *my dear-*

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ly beloved Brethren, that are *converted*, and in the *ſtate of Grace* already, *I commend you to God*, as unto a *gracious, reconciled, tender, merciful, indulgent, all-ſufficient Father*; he will be unto you a *little Sanctuary*, *Ezek.* 11. 16. He will be unto you a *place of broad Rivers, and Streams*, Iſa. 33. 21. *He hath begun a good Work in you, and will perform it to the Day of Chriſt, I am confident*, Philip. 1. 6. Be not *anxiouſly careful* what you ſhall do, what ſhall become of you; take heed of *Security, Luke-warmneſs, leaving your Firſt-Love*; *Remember former Times*; *Do your firſt Works*; *ſtrengthen the things that remain, that are ready to dye. And God he is able to keep you, and he is faithful, and will keep you from falling, and preſent you faultleſs before the preſence of his Glory with exceeding joy.*

Jude 24, 25. *Now to Him that is able to do this, to* GOD *onely Wiſe, be Glory, Majeſty, Dominion and Power, both now, and for ever.* Amen.

FINIS.

God gave to man an upright face, y^t he
might view, & Stars adorne his majesty
The heavens a book, & Stars are letters fair
God is y^e writer, & my Reader are e.

Richard Annison owns this
Book & Christ Jesus

Jesus

Mary Annison

Sarah Annison

Mary Annison

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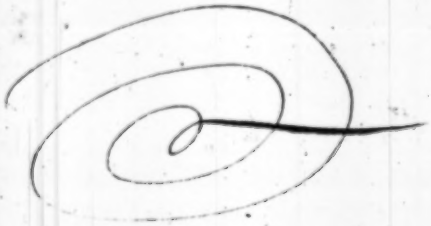
Jan 15